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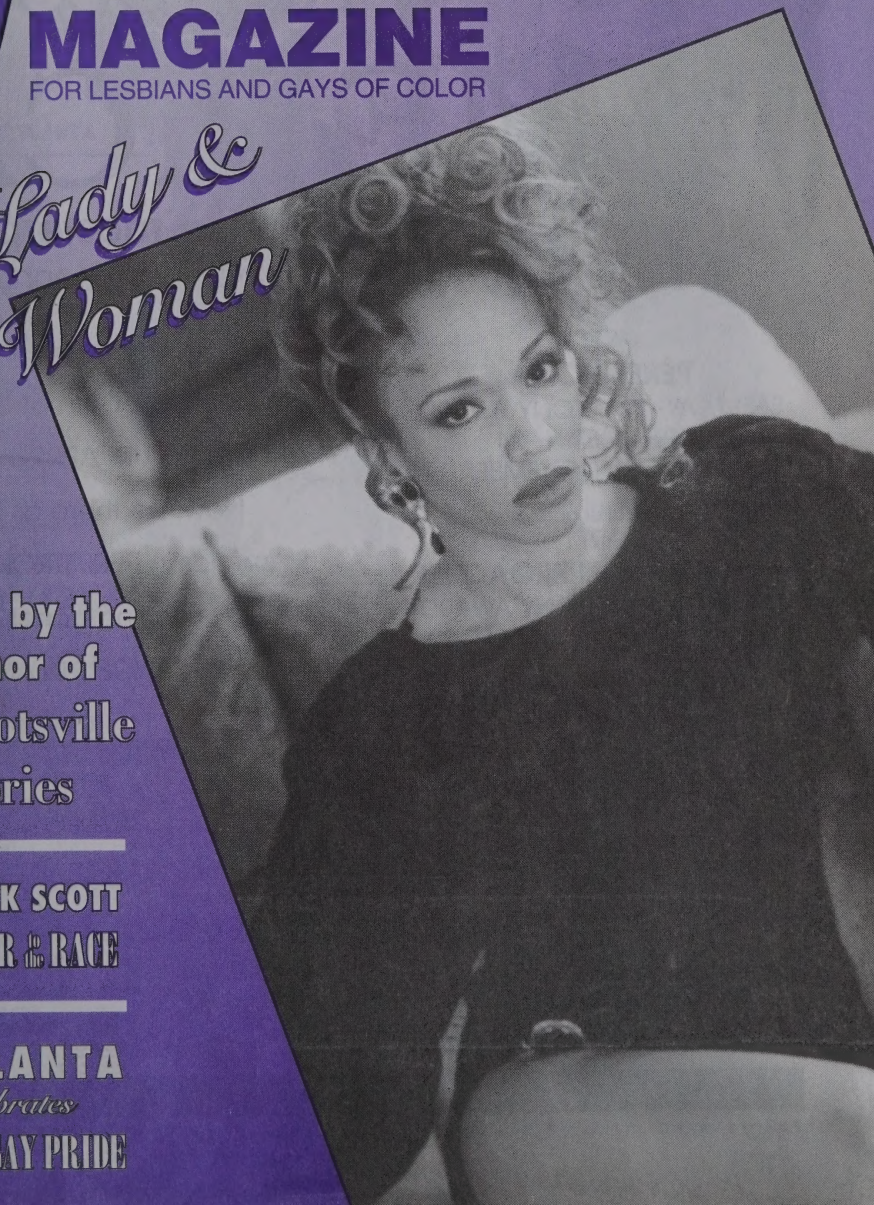

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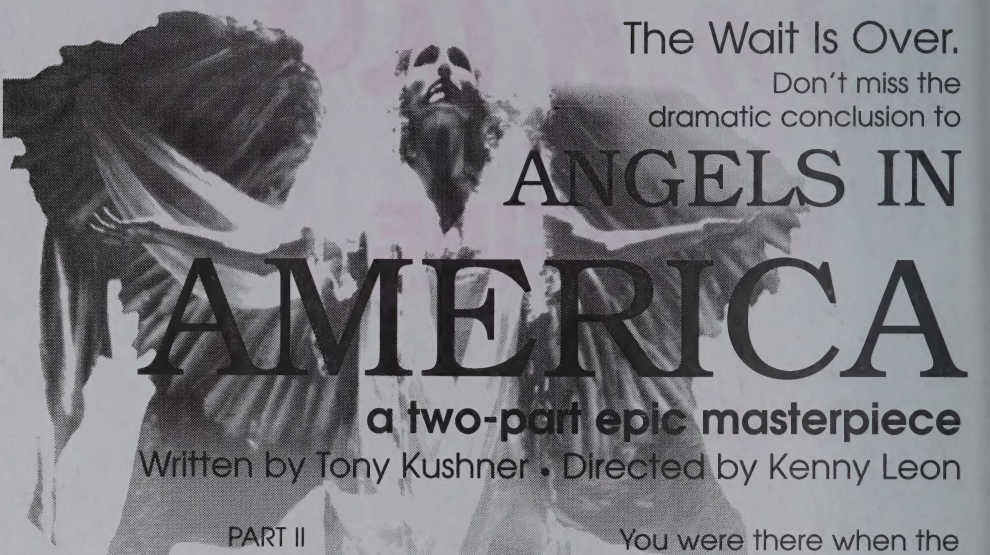

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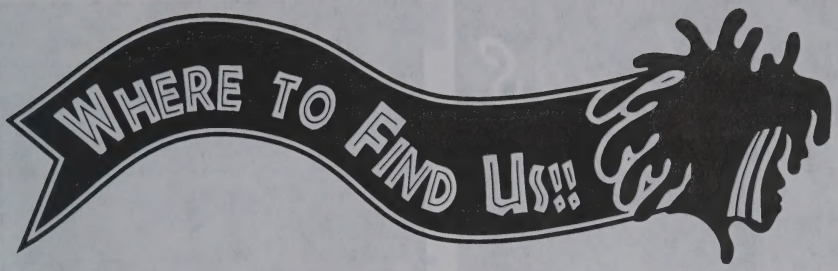

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August/September 1995
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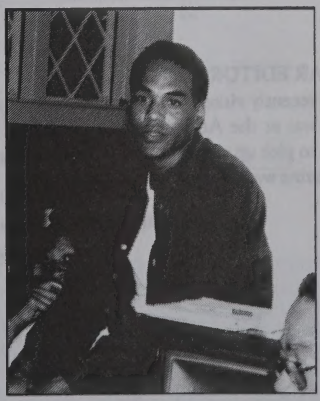
Black Gay Pride is Coming!

A Lady and A Woman Strikes Home



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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR:

I recently learned about your magazine through an article in the June 1995 issue of Sojourner. As an African American lesbian, I am thrilled to find out that there is literature specifically addressing issues relating to being African-American and gay. I would appreciate any information you could send me on how to obtain your magazine. Thank you very much!

Michelle Smith
Worcester, MA

DEAR EDITOR:

I was so excited to see the magazine VENUS here in the New York City area, and also all the wonderful people you have supporting it. We had many conversations about how to bring about positive change and empowerment to our southern communities. Keep up the great work and if I can be of service please call on me.

United through diversity,

Maurice O'Brian Franklin
New York, New York

DEAR EDITOR:

My name is LaRhonda Slaughter, I'm a 27 black lesbian. I have been "out of the closet" for almost 2 years. In that time I have been unable to make friends with other lesbians. Some are snooty, stuck-up, think they are above everyone else. I was hoping you could tell me where I could find some (Los Angeles, Long Beach and surrounding areas) down-to-earth gay and lesbian people.

LaRhonda Slaughter

DEAR EDITOR:

I first read a copy of your publication about two months ago and I was quite impressed. It was very enlightening and positive. I am very familiar with Atlanta, and this is even a greater sign of the strength of the African-America Gay and Lesbian Community in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

I am interested in receiving your magazine on a regular basis, since I feel that there is so much that I am missing.

Also being a young African-American professional, who is continually striving for excellence, if there is any way I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

Gregory B. West
Winston-Salem, NC

DEAR EDITOR:

I recently visited your fair city for a family reunion and was at the Atlanta Underground Mall and was able to pick up your magazine. Besides my family this magazine was a welcome sight. Thank you.

Guy Madison
Sacramento, CA

DEAR EDITOR:

While on vacation in the beautiful city of Cincinnati, Ohio, I had the pleasure of reading your magazine.

Keep up the good work!

Selene S. McNairy

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Age:..... 51

Status:..... Extremely Attached

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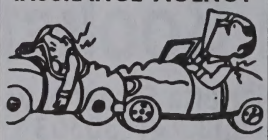

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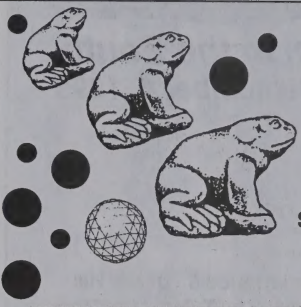

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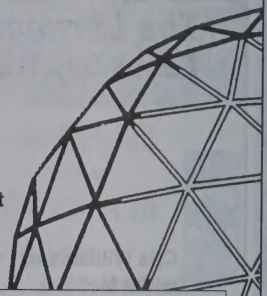

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A Lady and A Woman

Interview with Dr. Shirlene Holmes

By Eve Wernicky

It was perhaps her darkest moment. The bout with cancer had made everything uncertain, disruptive. But on her deathbed, the culmination of the lessons she had learned and lived prompted her to react the only way she knew how:

"I think death is a choice and I'm not done yet, I still have work to do."

So Atlanta-based playwright Dr. Shirlene Holmes, 37, fought her way back to health last year and like the characters in her plays and stories, she typifies the complex multi-faceted strong African-American women she writes about.

"I am not the same person," Holmes said, her voice full of rich cadence. "I live in immediate time. I think more locally."

And her new vigor about her work has been centralized in sending a clear message; touching her audiences and providing them a profoundly uplifting experience.

But instead of thrusting a cantankerous militant tone on issues surrounding homosexuality, women and the African-American experience, she simply lets the work speak for itself.

Her latest is the play, "A Lady and A Woman," which follows two African-American women at the end of the 19th century in their search for courage and a new life in a small town.

"The play celebrates so much and is very dear to me. It is my 'Color Purple,' "said the Georgia State University communications professor.

It is set to be published by Applause Books and an excerpt was performed at the recent Washington D.C. Gay Pride celebration.

The two central characters, Biddie Higgins, an emotionally-inclined butcher, and Miss Flora Divine, an inn owner/healer/midwife, eventually begin a spiritual love affair, and heal and soothe each other through humor, intimacy, faith and disclosure.

Sondra Barrie, the acclaimed actress who reprises her role as Miss Flora in the Emory University production (playing Sept. 7, 9, 10 at Cannon Chapel) has been in several of Holmes' plays and called her characters intense and powerful.

Dr. Shirlene Holmes, author of "A Lady and a Woman" and "The Cotsville Stories."

"(Miss Flora) is a challenging character to play," Barrie said. "From the field of spiritual connectedness, she is full of pain yet has a lot of humor about life and the life she's lived. All of Shirlene's characters are strong, in touch with who they are and honest about where they are going."

And who these characters are come from Holmes' experience and women-dominated upbringing.

"I feel my work is very much of my experience. Being African-American is dramatic, real life is profound and dramatic," Holmes said.

Brenda Porter, starring in the role of Biddie in "A Lady and a Woman" by Dr. Shirlene Holmes.

Venus Magazine: Do you think your characters branch from your path of self-discovery?

Shirlene Holmes: "I don't think art comes from one place. I see Miss Flora as myself, but she is also a lot of women. I always portray characters with dimension in my life that have been profound."

VM: Your acclaimed *Cotsville Stories*, a collection of fictional vignettes — some which have been featured in previous Venus issues — seems to center around small-town Southern folk much like some of your other work.

SH: "I've always been enthralled by regular folk because they learn so much from living. And I've always loved the Southern flair because you can say a whole lot with twisted English. Southerners seem to capture passion and I hope to try to make people feel affirmed."

VM: You grew up in a matriarch on the southside of Queens, New York. What is the most important lesson you learned from your mother?

SH: "That God is. My mother would pray and things would happen. She was a single mother at 19, but was determined that we do better than she did. Not attending college was unquestionable looked up to her. I learned how to be feminine from her — not just the lace stockings, but the importance of being a woman."

"I think every woman has the capacity of being feminine, having grace, being a healer as well as being powerful — able to carry the load. I cannot worry about attaching labels to oneself. God is male and female. We all have a balance."

VM: How essential is the concept of spirituality to your work?

SH: "Spirituality is essential to my existence. For most people, sexuality is their first identity. It certainly is not mine. I don't think I'm a lesbian before I'm black or a woman. Once you are in the spirit, there is no gender, no black or white. We are whole."

Dr. Holmes will lecture at Emory's Dobbs University Center on Thursday, Sept. 7, 1995 at 4:00 PM in Room 220. She will read from *The Cotsville Stories* and other works.

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer and a former journalist of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Sondra Barrie, starring in the role of Ms. Flora Divine in "A Lady and a Woman" by Dr. Shirlene Holmes.

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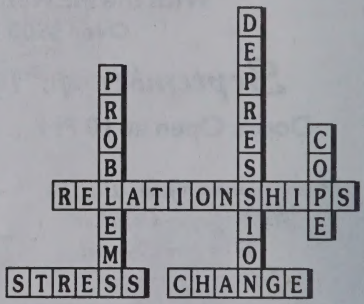

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Racism Under the Rainbow

By Beryl Jackson (B.J.) Part III of III

For some time, I've wondered what the Atlanta gay and lesbian community is doing about its internal racism? There seems to be a general awareness of the separateness in the community, yet a deafening silence about its existence. With no foreseeable time as to when we would start talking about it. I seized the opportunity I had to set up a public forum. I began by talking to people I know and don't know about getting together and talking about racism in the gay and lesbian community. The end result was a Charis Thursday night program held at the first Existentialist Congregation on July 27th. The program was co-sponsored by Charis and various organizations in the community. The program was held in the form of a community meeting and is the first in a series of dialogues within the community which asked, explored, and answered questions concerning racism in the gay and lesbian community.

The meeting was attended by over 150 people and the discussion centered around many forms of racism and racist attitudes within the community. One of the ways we were asked to look at racism was the presentation of the gay and lesbian community and who's in that picture. The speaker emphasized that the lack of "people of color" in the picture meant all "people of color" not just African Americans. This was a point that was to be repeated many times through the night, that racism is not just an issue between blacks and whites.

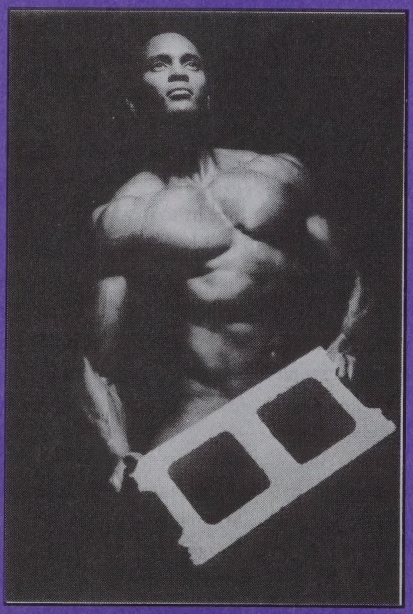
Another speaker said she believed individuals must do things about racism not the community, meaning white people must challenge other white people about their racist attitudes and statements and be backed up by whites who agree with the challenge. She said she believed it must begin with individual consciousness.

The differences among people and the importance of accepting these differences was talked about. We were told by one Native American who said she grew up on a reservation that "assimilation equals distinction" in her mind.

The issue of how people of color are asked to join this protest march or come to this rally to stop homophobic legislature and why nothing is being said about the current attack on affirmative action which is a racist attack on freedom in this country was also addressed. The white community was asked why there is no organizing around this issue. The answer was that the challenge for white people is to get involved in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

9½ Weeks



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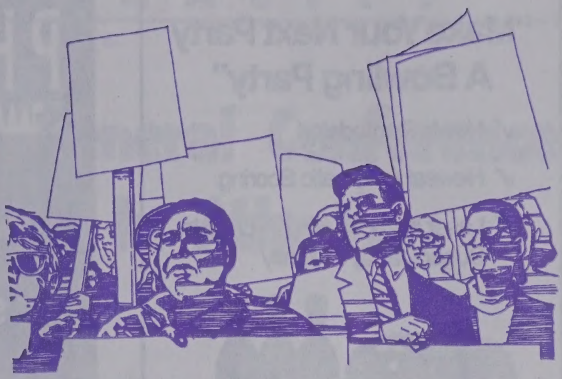
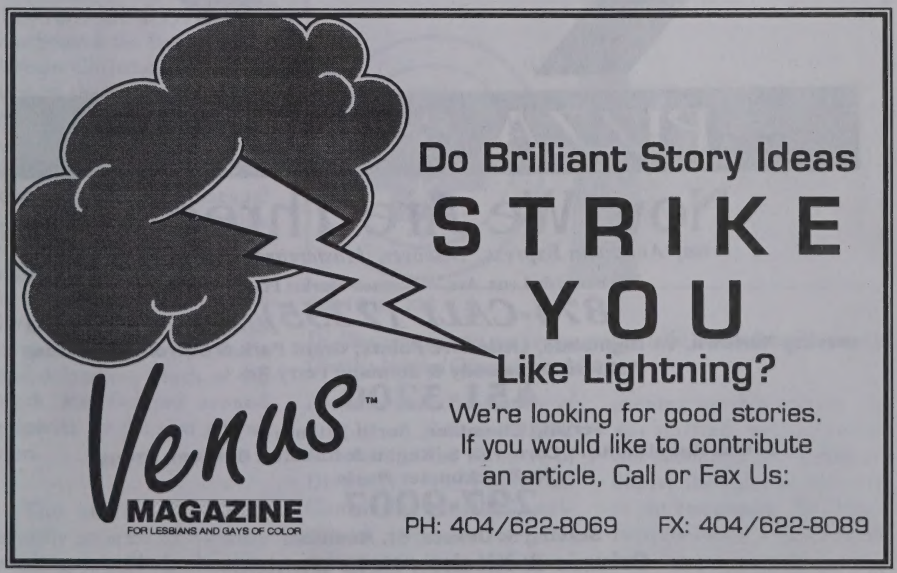
issues that don't directly involve them.

One of the most important lessons for me took place in front of mine and everyone else's eyes. A young woman rose to speak about the complicity of racism and how she felt we had all just viewed an act of racism and no one challenged it. She referred to an announcement that had been given by another young black woman and co-worker and the fact that a white man got up and restated everything the woman had just said. She asked that white people address the issue so that the man could feel supported in challenging his racism. The point being made was that the woman had put out the information eloquently and there was no need for it to be validated by the white male. Black people are capable of doing things, making decisions without it being approved by whites. This raised the defenses of the man who proclaimed immediately he was not a racist but who called the next morning to say he'd learned a lot at the meeting and was thankful it was held.



Although I was glad to see so many people at the forum and felt that everyone had taken something of importance with them from it and despite the fact people expressed the desire to do it again and want to do it on a regular basis, there is a sadness within me due to the fact that this is 1995 and this seems to be just the first step in a very long process. When does the rainbow really become inclusive of everyone and when does a picture of the gay and lesbian community in Atlanta represent all spectrums of the rainbows within this community. When do we stop all the talking and simply DO IT!!!!



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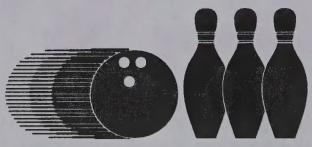

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UFMCC 17th General Conference Convenes In Atlanta

The Seventeenth General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches convened at the Westin Peachtree Hotel in Atlanta, July 23-30, 1995 with the theme "All Things are Possible!" The 27-year-old denomination that evolved from a meeting of 12 concerned individuals who embraced the dream of it's founder and moderator, The Rev. Elder Troy Perry, has become the largest gay & lesbian Christian denomination in the world. There are over 400 congregations worldwide, reaching out to disenfranchised gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual persons in the context of the Christian Church. The gathering in Atlanta was historic in many ways. It was the largest-ever attended, with more than 2,000 registrants and delegates. Much of the work was focused around preparing for the next generation.

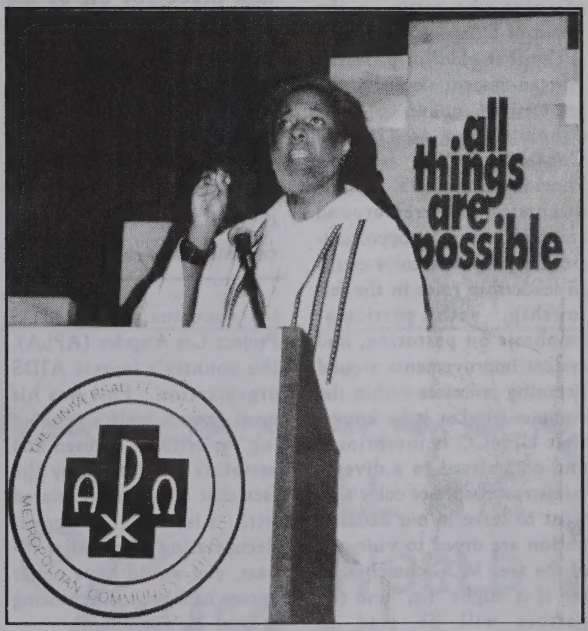


PHOTO BY: KES

Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones was keynote speaker at the Metropolitan Community Church's National Convention in Atlanta.

The unofficial kick-off actually occurred on Saturday evening, July 22nd, when the denomination's Department of People of Colors—DPOC (now called the Ministry of Diversity in Spiritual Community—MDISC) welcomed early arrivals and delegates in their traditional evening worship service. It was spirited, well-attended and intentional in it's effort to display the cultural diversity in our community. Dr. Elias-Farajaje-Jones, a Ph.D. from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Howard University, Washington, D.C. in its Department of Religion, delivered a powerful sermon entitled "Let the Dead Bury the Dead." Spectacular music was provided by the Gospel choir of MCC Washington, D.C., a 30-voice group comprised largely of African American gay and lesbian people.

An African American Leadership Caucus was convened on Monday, July 24th, led by Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, one of three persons of color who serve on the Board of Elders. Rev. Garner is the first elder of primarily African-descent elected to the governing board of the denomination at General Conference XVI held in Phoenix, AZ in 1993. A frank discussion occurred around issues of improving opportunities for people of color clergy in leadership roles in the fellowship, with particular emphasis on pastoring, and system improvements around licensing processes within the community. Let it be known that UFMCC is intentional and committed to a diverse ministry. People of color who want to serve in our denomination are urged to visit one of the area MCC churches, to see if it might "fit," and the pastors will be glad to acquaint you with opportunities to serve!

First MCC-Atlanta dedicated their new sanctuary on Sunday, July 23rd with great fanfare. Moderator of UFMCC, The Rev. Elder Troy Perry preached; most of the Elders were present. The worship was spiritually-deep and the music stunning, and unbelievable. They are located at 1370 Tullie Rd. NE. Visit them soon.

On Wednesday, July 26th, the DPOC/MDISC Luncheon featured Mr. Phil Wilson of Los Angeles, CA, public-policy coordinator for AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), the country's largest AIDS organization. Phil was his usual powerful self, encouraging yet critical, focused and certainly challenged by the fact that a Latino translated with him as he spoke. Recuperating from earlier illness, you would have never known he'd been sick, looking at him! He's gorgeous!

Many people have asked me why I'm not in an all-black denomination like Unity. I believe that there is a place for all of us everywhere. We must seek to be where we are called to be. It's important for them to have me there, reminding them of the continuing challenge to diversify and remain fully committed to inclusion.

Thursday's AIDS Luncheon was keynoted by Ms. Dorothy Triplett, who is the Assistant Director for Minority and Other Special Populations for the Office of the Associate Director for HIV/AIDS, at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. I've heard Dorothy speak before. She challenged us with her spiritually-based philosophy, and always being able to impart current knowledge abut the movement of the disease in our community.

There were several diversity-focused workshops offered us a part of a tremendous bank of learning opportunities. I shared in one entitled "Same Enemy—Different Target." We focused on learning how to cope with the so-called "Christian Right."

On Saturday, we marched to the King Center to place a wreath of remembrance at the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was an incredible sight to see hundreds of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people marching through "the 'hood," rainbow banners blowing, respectfully and curiously being looked at by the residents. It was an amazing, impressive sight, and deeply moving when we stood in front of Martin's crypt and said, "Thank You."

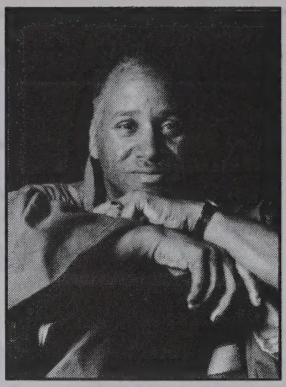
UFMCC is currently negotiating the purchase of a new $3 million headquarters in West Hollywood, CA. It is a wonderful piece of property that will enable us to meet the needs of our community for years to come. Rev. Perry challenged us to double the size of congregations, large and small, and to "get on-line." We are an internet-active community on-line for the future and preparing for the next generation. Contributions to the Capital Campaign to raise

funds for the building can be made, tax-deductible, to the current fellowship office located at 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

I am proud to be in UFMCC. Many people have asked me why I'm not in an all-black denomination like Unity. I believe that there is a place for all of us everywhere. We must seek to be where we are called to be. It's important for them to have me there, reminding them of the continuing challenge to diversify and remain fully committed to inclusion. We live in a multi-cultural world, with many different kinds of people. We need to appreciate our diversity and come to know that in the Divine Creator's mind, "There's Room at the Table for ALL!"

Well, that's UFMCC's 17th General Conference in a nutshell from this writer's perspective! Thanks, "Hotlanta" for being a proud host. In 1997, we go international, convening General Conference 18 in Sydney, Australia! May the God of your Understanding be with you and empower you to be all that you can be as you journey forward.

Rev. Herbert E. Evans is the Member Services Director at We The People, and AIDS advocacy-group in Philadelphia, PA. He is transfer-clergy in UFMCC and serves the denomination in a variety of capacities in AIDS Ministry and other designated committee work. He travels, speaks often about AIDS/HIV, recovery issues, and



Rev. Herbert E. Evans

of course, his passion, spirituality. He and his partner Mr. Todd Conway, live lovingly together in a fashionable apartment in South Philadelphia. We welcome Rev. Evans to Venus Magazine as a contributing writer!

IF IT'S REALLY *Love* TELL THE WORLD

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Labels

By Nyack Feliz

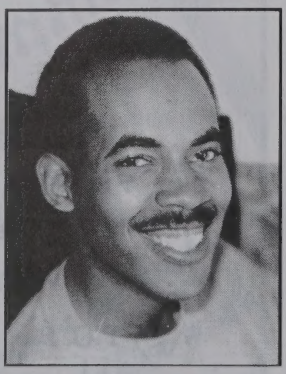
Black, Puerto rican, Latino, Gay, Fag, Negro, Maricon, Pato, Loca, these and others have all been "labels" that people have used to try and put me in a category. People have a tendency to want everything wrapped up in a pretty little package, with a bow and a card. Whenever something doesn't fit into one of our stereotypes we automatically dismiss it, or try to beat it into something we can recognize, and call it a name. In the process, we end up labeling ourselves, giving ourselves names, beating ourselves to fit into something everyone else can recognize. My question is, do we need them?

When I first came to the United States, as a young 18 year old private in the Army, I was confronted with the task of identifying myself. Not only did I have to go through what every young gay person has to endure, but I also had to figure out what I was. This was something that I was not used to, having to define myself on the basis of my color and origin. I honestly did not know there was a difference between being black and being Puerto rican. I was both, in my eyes, but it wasn't enough, it was not the same to be African American or Hispanic.

I distinctly remember the first time I actually had to think about this issue. A fellow man of color came up to me and asked, "so what are you, black or Puerto rican." For a moment, I hesitated, the question was not clear to me at that time. He saw me thinking about it and dismissed me as some brother trying to sell out. I couldn't even understand English very well, never mind this concept of separating myself into categories and to choose which one was more important. For a long time after that incident, I felt the need to define myself. But no matter what I did to find some comfortable middle ground were I could fit, people always found some other category, some new twist to the labeling game.

Panamanian, Turkish, French, Dominican, Top, Bottom, are just a few of the never ending niches that people keep finding to put me in. Mind you that I am not free of sin myself. I too find comfortable names for certain kinds of people with certain kinds of looks. Its something that happens without even thinking about it, and this is what scares me. Have we gotten so predictable that we can tell what someone is just by their appearance? Is it fair to limit ourselves by our vision? I think not.

It has been a long time since I first boarded that plane heading to the land of opportunity, and I have learned a great deal. It really doesn't matter what people think I am, as long as I know, and as long as I am comfortable with it. People can look at me and think what ever they want, but if they can't get past the initial impression, then they will never know of the hidden treasures that lay inside. It will be their loss. So, do we need these labels? That is not up to me to decide. Look within yourself, I am sure the answer is there.



"Labels" author Nyack Feliz

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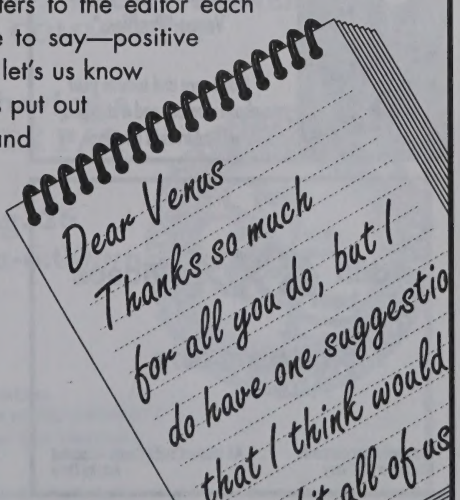
Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



Keep Writing Those Letters

VENUS MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 89238
Atlanta, GA 30312

PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Gregory Victorianne

Age:..... 35

Status:..... Single

Career:..... Community Educator

Hometown:.. Chicago, IL

Latest Book:. "Afrekete: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Writing" by Catherine McKinley

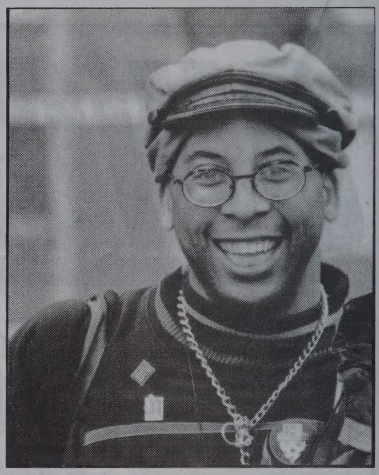


PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Gregory resides in Roxbury, Mass., and serves as a public policy coordinator and community educator for MOCAA, Men of Color Against AIDS. He most enjoys collecting Afro-Caribbean artifacts and listening to his favorite Incognito CD's.

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Survey

1) **Are you familiar with African-American AIDS Organizations in your area?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

2) **Have you ever donated money or goods to an African-American AIDS Organization?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

3) **How often do you volunteer for any nonprofit organization?**

☐ 2-4 Hrs./Wk. ☐ 2-4 Hrs./Mo.

☐ 2-4 Hrs./Yr. ☐ None

4) **How many African-American gay men or lesbians do you know who are HIV+?**

☐ 1 - 4 ☐ 5 - 9 ☐ more than 10

5) **If you were available to donate your time, what type skills do you have to give?**

☐ Legal Advice ☐ Entertainer ☐ Promoter

☐ Domestic/Housekeeper ☐ Administrative/Organizer

☐ Medical/Psychological ☐ Driver/Deliveries

☐ Telephone/Interviewer ☐ Accounting

☐ Cook ☐ Builder/Handyman/woman

Stroking the Flames: Intimacy Enhancement Tips

By Carla Anderson, MA

Some of us are under the impression that if we seek counseling then we must really be in crisis. This is especially true if we are in a relationship and couples' therapy is suggested or recommended (or even threatened). However, there are many non-crisis issues that may land a couple in therapy. A relationship that continues over a long period of time may eventually hit a sensuality speedbump. In other words, the happy couple is cruising along in that beginning happy blissful honeymoon period when BAM! Suddenly one wants to be intimate more while the other one less or maybe even not at all. Friday and Saturday nights isn't predictably spent making love anymore and you are lucky if you get a peck on the check from your lover who used to kiss you from head to toe increased communication is needed at this time to take the relationship to the next level if it is to continue to be a source of fulfillment for each of the parties involved.

There are some activities that we can engage in with our partner to get the juices going again and stoke the flames of sensuality. Many of these are found in self-help books on sexuality and romance. Other suggestions are from couples who have happily discovered them on their own. A first step the couple can take is to make dates with each other so that certain days of the week or month are designated as days just for couple stuff. This is especially helpful for couples involving children or a partner that travels a lot for business. During these dates, the focus of the conversation should be similar to what we used to talk about when dating. That is, focusing on finding out more about one another, especially sexually. There are a number of different reference points we can use to get the conversation going. One is using the history that had developed thus far between our partner and ourselves. We can reminisce about a recent encounter or reinforce to our partner what we enjoyed about past experiences. This is also the optimum time to talk about what you would like differently or new. Try to avoid talking about sexual likes and dislikes in the bedroom. It works best if it is in a setting where our partner does not feel immediate pressure to perform or could feel criticized.

Another subject one can talk about on their date are each other's fantasies. One should first check in with their partner if talking about fantasies with one another would make them extremely uncomfortable. If not, then this is generally an area that couples can have fun and frolic. Fantasies repertoire. Again it does not matter whether the fantasy involves a faceless person one's partner or the cute clerk at the mall. If each partner makes the other feel welcome to share their fantasies with one another, then more likely the playmate will be ourselves and not anyone else. If one finds they have a completely empty rolodex of fantasies, then we can share with our partner what we have heard about or seen in the media arena

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

that we found titillating. This again could lead into what we would like to try, experiment with or just talk about in more detail.

This leads to another enhancement tip: phone sex. Often, most of us work and some of us work and some of us work two jobs. What better way to connect with each other during those 10-12 hour days than via the telephone. Of course, discretion is highly advised. There is no better way for your co-workers to know you more than you would like than if your conversation is inadvertently broadcast throughout the store or office. However, if privacy is available, one could tease, tempt and entice one's partner or the excitement could be the build up to designated date night or the upcoming weekend. Many couples report that once they were able to separate pleasuring each other verbally from the actual act, they then felt more freedom to express themselves.

If phone fantasies are a little bit too risky for some of us then leaving our lovers notes, poems or letters may feel more comfortable. These can be both hidden or placed out in the open. Some suggested places are the bedroom, the bathroom mirror, one's car, the briefcase or purse (or backpack) the refrigerator or the underwear drawer. Wherever one feels one could catch their partner by surprise without embarrassing them would be a good place. One could even get high tech and leave them a voice mail, fax them a coded or blatant message or leave them an e-mail on their desktop or laptop. Some couples have even designated codes they leave each other on their pagers that quickly bring a smile to their face even in a crowded board room or department store floor.

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Another suggested way of letting our partner know we are thinking about them when we are not around is to buy romantic books, magazines or articles for one another to read. The subject matter could range from the mildly romantic to the highly erotic. Also discretely, one could leave copies of highlighted passages for our favorite person. In addition, a book or magazine could be left open to just the right page for our lover to come across. Other couples have found that reading to one another enhances their sensuality. Creating a physical mood along with 'storytime' could increase the overall effect. Some suggested settings could include a bubble bath, a dimly lit living room with plenty of comfortable pillows, incense or candles. Achieving comfort in a potentially awkward situation may increase the chances of a repeat reading.

One final suggestion involves an overall attitude shift so that, again, the relationship can proceed to the next level. This is to re-examine each other's definition of sex and sensuality. Do both just focus on the act or have to be conclude by it. If so, then expanding one's horizon may help to alleviate boredom and open up many other avenues. By including in our definition of sex the acts of just holding just caressing, just massaging, just kissing or just whatever, then the concept becomes much more expanded. That is not a typographical error that I utilized the word just so many times instead, it is to emphasize that with sensuously enhancing a relationship comes not just thinking of more creative positions but more creative options. Remember, our biggest sex organ is between our ears. It is the inclusion of all our senses in this dance that could open many doors for the couple who happily discovers them.

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Black Gay Pride Atlanta '95

by Charlene Cothran

Although no 'formal' committee has surfaced to organize Atlanta's Black Gay Pride celebration, a seriously exciting weekend is being planned by a few of Atlanta's black gay and lesbian businesses.

Of course everybody knows that the children flood into Atlanta every Labor Day weekend from all over the country. So what makes this Labor Day special?! Maybe it's the excitement surrounding the '96 Olympic Games. Maybe it's the freedom and Pride we feel having our own publication. Maybe it's the heat and we've just all gone crazy!! What ever it is has got the kids primping and planning!

The first African-American AIDS memorial and candlelight vigil is the only place to be on the weekends opening night, Friday, Sept. 1, 7pm-10pm. This event will take place at the intimate Water Works Park, only minutes from downtown. We'll celebrate the memory of our fallen brothers and sisters as we wave and bop to the live music of Atlanta's hottest gospel music ensemble Charese Stephens and B. Chase William's. The finale will be performed by the duet of Collette Robinson (formerly of Moca) and Jomandi's J. Karen Thomas, who brought the house down at this years Atlanta Gospel Music Awards. Since AIDS is a disease that affect people from ALL walks of life, it is totally appropriate to encourage your friends, coworkers and family to attend.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Mandy Carter (r) and Pat Hussain (l) at this year's National Black Gay Pride in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday morning, though, you definitely want to leave your mother at home and press your way to Kalo's Coffee House for our Soul to Soul Brunch. Enjoy soft jazz, live, by Barry Bruce and Co. and an open mic poetry SLAM from 10:30am-2:30pm. A delectable menu is available. Who knows , you may even find a dazzling date for the evening.

O.K. it's Saturday nite! Your looking great! Feeling good and smelling delicious! Where are you headed? Everybody's first stop is the Radisson Hotel for the official Black Gay Pride Atlanta Party! Hot models work the runway in the latest club attire during a New York style house party! Door opens at 11:00pm. The event is sponsored by Venus Magazine, M-Press Modeling Agency and Physikos at Ansley.

Check out the national events calendar (on page 40) for activities and always remember to PLAY SAFE!!

BLACK GAY PRIDE ATLANTA 1995

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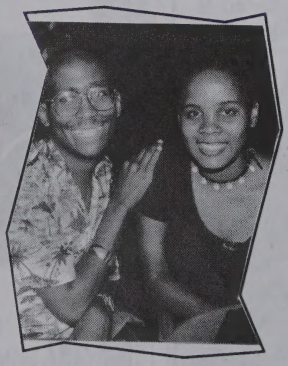


Delectable Menu Available!! Kalo's Coffee House, 1248 Clairmont Road. 325-3733, 10:30 am til 2:30 pm. $3 Suggested Donation.

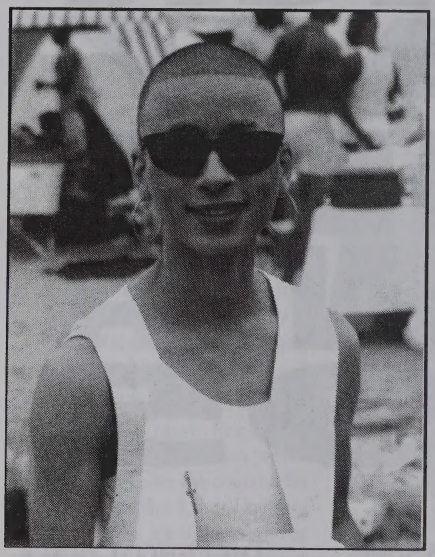
SATURDAY SEPT. 2

THE OFFICIAL BLACK GAY PRIDE PARTY

Come Celebrate the Magic at the Radisson Hotel Ballroom. Courtland and International, Downtown Atlanta. $7 Door. Doors Open 11 PM.

SATURDAY SEPT. 2

Another Page from Our "Family Album"



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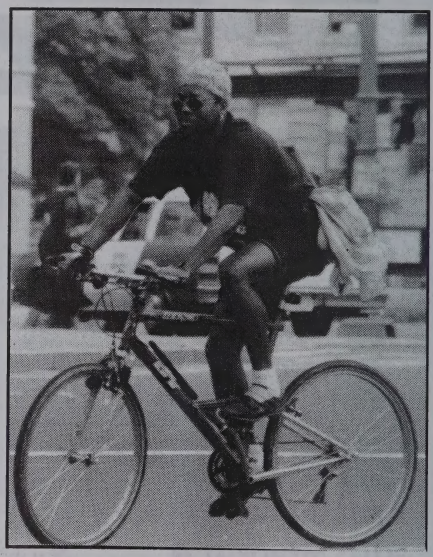

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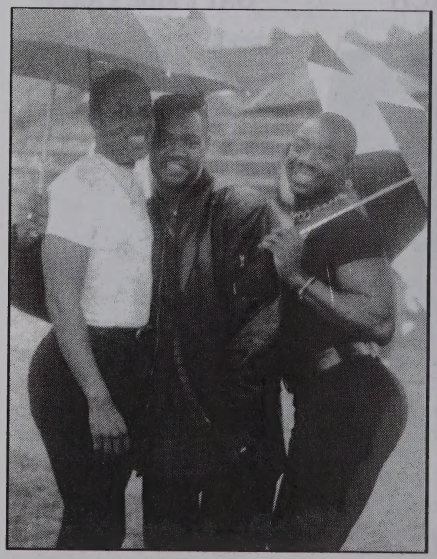

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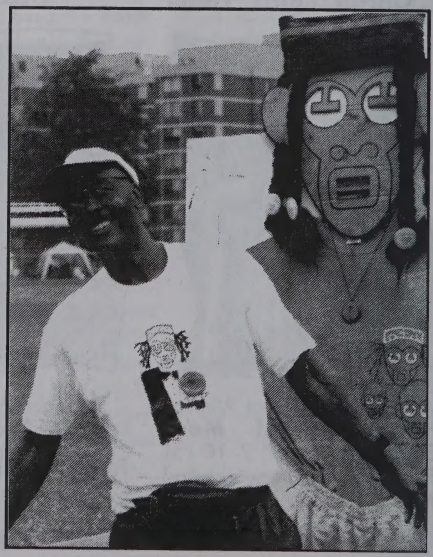

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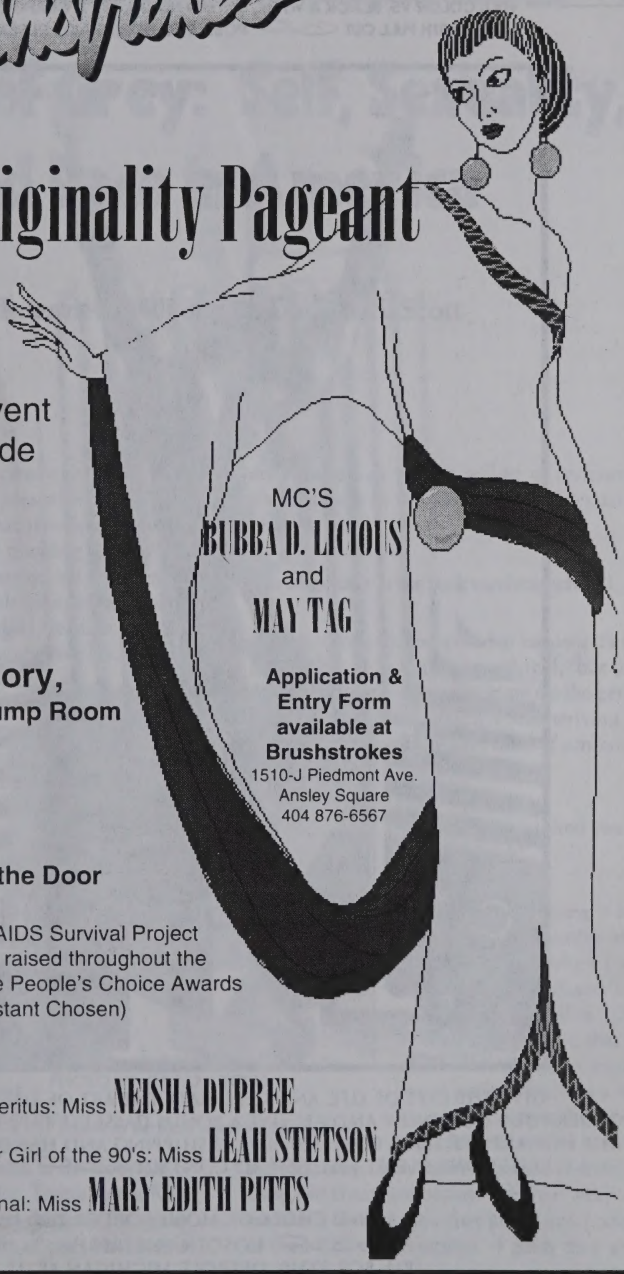
Brushstrokes

Miss Originality Pageant



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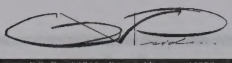

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Shades of Grey: Self, Sexuality, and Race in America

An Interview with author Darieck S. Scott

by Douglas E. Jones

Traitor to the Race cannot be dismissed as another black-boy-loves-white-boy story. Such a reflection is too pat, ridiculously easy and far from the truth in these troubling times where people, black, white, or otherwise, are searching for simple answers to the difficult questions of communal responsibility, individual freedom and the meaning of a worthwhile, substantive life. In this, his first novel, Darieck S. Scott takes the reader on an introspective trip that has more to do with questions of self-identity and courage than the problematic dynamics of race in America. There is a collision of realities here which demonstrate the polemics the main character, an African-American brother named Kenneth, must juggle while existing within the multiple traumas of a homophobic and racist America and a homophobic and ignorant African America. This is important reading, valuable stuff and Darieck has beautifully captured the tension of a Black man at the crossroads of various points in his life. But, Traitor to the Race also reaches beyond itself and demands the reader remember what it was to learn of one's blackness in white America...or what it will be to understand one's whiteness in the diversity which exists in America today.

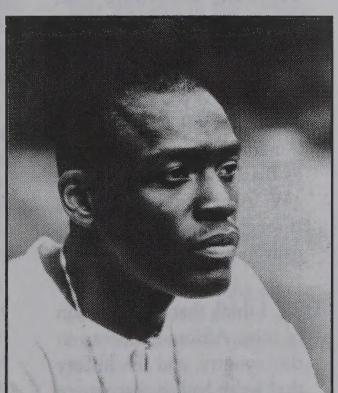

PHOTO BY: JULIAN OKWU

"Traitor to the Race" author Darieck Scott.

Venus Magazine: Is the book autobiographical?

Darieck S. Scott: In terms of what happens it's not autobiographical, but the themes of it are for the period in which I was writing it. They were issues of concern to me at that time.

VM: What inspired you to write the book?

DSS: I started writing it as a short story in a creative writing class at Yale when I was working on my Master's in Afro-American studies. One of the instructors said that we should actually try to write a novel because that was a way to get out there and get published; short stories are not seen that often. You know, I was kind of drawn to these two characters because the short story was essentially the first game they played and a couple of their first conversations. I guess they were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

working through some issues that I needed to work through. That kind of led me on. Also the form worked for me at that time—writing in small vignettes that are laced together. I just worked on it. I started in the summer of 1990—I was supposed to start working at a law firm, but I quit the day before and started building the novel from the short story.

VM: Those vignettes, I guess the styles and forms that you play with, your use of them—specifically the fantasy and the eroticism—are those meant to heighten the reader's awareness of Kenneth's struggles and his attempts to reconcile himself to himself?

DSS: Yes, they are and that happened in a way that I was not entirely clear about when I was writing it. In retrospect, it looks to me that the fragmentary style is a way of charting Kenneth's relationship to his own identity and how complicated that is. Also, it represents how multifaceted, how multivalent that relationship is. I think what the novel was trying to do is to track the way in which a Black gay identity—this particular Black gay identity—would have to exist and have lots of different relationships to the rest of the world, so that Kenneth is looking out at other people, fantasizing about them, pulling aspects back into himself, projecting his own stuff onto other people and in the process of doing that—working in his unconscious—developing who he is and bringing that to consciousness, which I hope he begins to do by the end of the novel. So, it represents the complicated process of the relationship between fantasy and politics and who you are in terms of sex, sexuality, eroticism, and desire. I am trying to put all those things in play with that structure and what's going on in those particular structures.

VM: Ummmm. Collision of several different questions, I'll try to separate them: First, 'inhabitation,' the living through of other people's experiences—I guess a process of becoming something else, experiencing something else through someone else and structuring that Black gay identity. Do you feel that we, as Black folks in a white America—to stretch further, as Black gay folks in a white gay America—are living through those inhabitations daily?

DSS: I think that the condition of being African-American in this country, and the history that we've had, is that we are both integral to and a part of this culture, the whiter culture—whatever you call American culture, whatever that composite is—as well as never feeling quite at home in it and being outside of it. So you get to the case of a Black gay person, someone who is conscious of themselves as such, that you are both within the African-American culture and the African-American community, but because of all the silence around the presence of gay men and lesbians in the African-American community and the way in which we're not really included in representations of ourselves as African-Americans, we are both fully part of that and outside of that as well. It's a fragmented perspective given what we're told; it has to become something which is unified and united and coherent and whole for each of us by what we do with it. We have to come into the consciousness of being able to stand in all those different places and bring them all together. Inhabitation, in a broader sense, would involve looking at all those particular pieces that you get thrown at you from the culture about what is to be Black or what it is to be a Black male or what it is to be Black, male, and gay or what it is to be gay or whatever and how those things get separated—that's sort of what Kenneth is doing. He's taking pieces that are given to him and then transforming them into something which makes sense to him. I think that is the central theme of the novel: something about being able to resist whatever labels you get, but at the same time knowing that you're taking part in some of them because you live in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

culture and you can't separate yourself from it altogether. You have to find your own place within all of that.

VM: We come to see Kenneth through a slow process of evolution—watching his frustration and growth through his experiences and fantasies. Does the inhabitation underscore the overall taboo—in terms of societal and communal definitions—of being Black and gay, of being Black and gay and involved with a white man?

DSS: Yes, I think it does go along with that very well and I think the title of the novel—the idea of being a traitor to the race—comments on that as well. For Kenneth that is the central theme, the label that he has to resist. He has to find some way to insist that he still belongs in the community. Yes, those things are being worked together. I think the idea of being in an inter-racial relationship, which is probably the easiest way to look at the novel and say that's what it's about, is the catalyst for him to have something to struggle with that's tangible. However, ultimately the novel is about Kenneth finding a way to resist all the labels which I was talking about and complying with them and finding where he is in the midst of them.

VM: The Black community dealing with its issues of homophobia....are we struggling to survive as a community and can we not "afford" to prioritize our existence in terms of the civil rights issues versus the rights of Black gays and lesbians or can we do it at the same time?

DSS: Is it that question, 'Are you African-American first or are you gay first'?

VM: Yeah, that question.

DSS: That question. Ummm...First, I don't see an inherent contradiction between the idea that we are in a struggle for our existence in this country and the fact that insisting that your being gay or lesbian or whatever means that you shouldn't be fully included in the community and think that the issues which keep you from being fully included shouldn't be addressed. I think that those things kind of go together because, ultimately, what Black liberation is about is about being able to be fully human and fully a part of whatever community you happen to be in and being able to be released from all the strictures that keep you from being able to do that and certainly one of those strictures both within the African-American culture and the whiter culture has to do with sexuality—and not just for gays and lesbians, but for heterosexuals, for women, for whatever. I guess the very idea that you should postpone some aspect of the struggle, the idea that you're supposed to put something on hold so that the other thing can get done, I don't think that works. I think as a practical matter it just doesn't work.. You don't really have a community if what you're doing is faking it, pretending that some vital part of it—and Black gays and lesbians have been a vital part of the community—doesn't exist. You're not effecting community, you're not building one, you're just imposing your particular view of what you want on the rest of the community and if people are falling in line with it, that's what they're doing, but it's not really true. You will be sowing the seeds of your own destruction because you can't really face up to what's going on. It's almost like that's a sort of axiom of politics and culture in the world: You can't continually repress things, you can't continually push them off and pretend they're not there because they always, always come back. The longer you repress them the more violent they are when they return....and the more destructive.

VM: And we've finally gotten to the boiling point.

DSS: Well, there's a contemporary moment we've been living in since at least the mid-80's where we, all of us Black gay and lesbian people who are conscious of ourselves as being that, are making ourselves

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known more. There's a lot more to be done there. As far as reaching the boiling point maybe this is it, but there may be worse to come yet because I still don't see that the issues are being taken up as much as they ought to be. We need to be concerned how we, as African-Americans, are treating each other around these issues of sexuality. There's a great deal of resistance in broaching the issue and there's been a long contemporary history, at least since the 1960s and the Black Power Movement, of saying that, 'Oh, it's just a white man's disease,' etc. All that kind of stuff really has to be addressed and really has to be deeply reformulated. That is what I would consider one of the most pressing issues for us to deal with. I don't know how we do it, but when I say the worse is yet to come, I think the worst is coming around that issue of struggling to get everybody else to say, 'OK, you're a part of us.' We're going to have to deal with our homophobia and that's very difficult. Very difficult.

VM: And it's very clear in the book that that's Kenneth's ultimate struggle: Him coming to his own identity as a Black gay man and then dealing with other Black gay men.

DSS: Yeah. Yeah. And then the larger issue stemming from that is dealing with other Black men period. The first part of that is him dealing with other Black gay men, then the next part is him dealing with Black men in general, then the construct of Black masculinity and the Black community, and he moves on from there. And all of that certainly doesn't happen in the book, but what does get done in the novel is the first part of that begins to open up for him. It's a long process that we all have to deal with because we live in a society where we're so systematically degraded it makes it very difficult for really loving and respectful relationships to occur easily between us: Between Black men and Black women, between Black gay men and each other, and so on. There's a lot of work to be done.

VM: What are you commenting on about the state of Black-white relations in America?

DSS: (laughs) I don't know that I'm really commenting that much on it. I think the state of it in general is pretty bad, but I don't know how much of it I deal with in the novel. I certainly have Evan (Kenneth's lover) in the position where he's having to deal with some of these issues. But what I like about what I did with him is that his consideration of these issues with Kenneth, with Kenneth's relationship to his (Kenneth's) cousin's death, and Kenneth's relationship to him (Evan), makes him consider his own role playing in society as a white man, as a white man who has particular kind of looks—soap opera kind of looks—and having him confront that stuff and confront what it is to be white. I think that's clearly an issue that has to be addressed because one of the biggest impediments to white people understanding racism is that they generally don't have to think of themselves as being white, unless there's some race issue that's suddenly thrown at them and then they bond together against Black people or whatever it is that they do. Whiteness, therefore, depends on some definition of blackness and he (Evan) kind of begins to investigate that. I do think that that's a necessary thing for white people to do. Again, that's another thing that's not easy for them to do and in some ways it is counter-intuitive because in some ways their power depends upon partly pretending that they're just human and largely unaware [of this race issue in America].

VM: And it's an issue that they usually don't have to face until they're well into adulthood, whereas we usually have to face it very young in childhood.

DSS: Right. Much earlier, much earlier.

VM: Did this story evolve of itself?

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DSS: You mean independent of my life?

VM: Yeah.

DSS: No, it had similarities to my life. I think that the reason for this story at the time that I wrote it, is that I was just coming out around that same period, which to me meant having to relieve some of the constraints on my own expression that I had really adhered to for a very long time—some of the rules of convention of what it meant to be whatever it was that I was supposed to be—and then some time after I came out I fell in love with someone who was white and I had that whole issue to deal with because I certainly never expected that to happen. I did not envision it, it was certainly not my fantasy of what my life would be like. And, you know, I kind of realized that was not the central issue, that there were a lot of other issues involved in it and I guess that it was a matter of instinct to follow this particular story because I had other stories I could have used in a novel and some of those may come to the fore later. But at that time this was something that I needed to do because it was all about what was happening for me at the same time. I needed to figure out who I was in relationship to what kind of labels were out there for me, what kind of visions were out there. Writing the story for me was part of that process, therefore it was very vital. Funny, now I look back on it and I say, 'Oh, I'm really over that issue'.

VM: So, although it's not autobiographical, per se, it very much involves alot of your thought at that time.

DSS: Yeah or alot of my process of whatever process that was I was going through that was subconscious. There are things that are said through various characters which are things that I might say or pieces of myself speaking to each other, but alot of it is really subconscious. For this writing experience, whatever was driving me to express something got filtered through this whole story that I was trying to make up. It's like your own private mythology: The story has symbols and things in it which have to do with something outside of the story.

VM: We spoke about this before: In terms of language and style, it's beautifully crafted, beautifully written. Was it difficult to write?

DSS: No. No, it wasn't. It wasn't difficult in the sense that I didn't sweat out every word and that kind of thing....

VM: Well, I mean how did you come up with the forms? There were some parts where you used reverse parenthesis and then there was a play...?

DSS: (laughs) You know I really don't know where that came from exactly. Like I said in the beginning, I think it had relationship to the theme of how you build self in a context where you are standing amongst different places. But, I'm not really sure where that came from except maybe from the kind of stories that I was reading—I've always been interested in narratives that are kind of complicated and dense and where there are lots of things put together. I think I really wanted to play with all that stuff and for some reason this particular novel came to me in scenes.

VM: Well, wonderfully crafted. You make reference to the very great and phenomenal Toni Morrison, one of the people you admire most?

DSS: Yeah, definitely. She's probably the person I admire most, not that I think there's much relationship between her writing and mine. But I admire her work because I think it's amazingly beautiful, but also because I think it's so full of wisdom. She's definitely my favorite—I know I've read all of her books more than once.

VM: Recently we've heard of the struggles of E. Lynn Harris and James Earl Hardy in bringing their works to the market place. Did you have similar experiences?

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DSS: I don't actually know about James Earl Hardy's experiences, but I do know about E. Lynn Harris' because I read about them before and I actually got to meet him. My experience wasn't similar to his because he self-published first and did alot of self-promotion because he was running into difficulty getting published. My situation was different—although I don't know how typical or atypical it was because I don't know any other writers—I just wrote the thing and started sending it around to agents and was rejected several times. That was very difficult because I remember thinking, 'I'm not the self-publishing type nor the self-promoting type, so I'm going to be in pretty bad shape if I can't get an agent because I don't even know this industry well.' But, I kept looking for one and just persevered through that [rejection] because I knew that was what happened and that rejection was a part of the whole process. I just kept looking, eventually I heard that Terry MacMillan was teaching a creative writing course at Stanford, so I tried to get in it and she told me my work was too advanced for the class but to come see her. So, I went to see her and I told her that I was in this quandary: I have this manuscript that I would like to get published but I don't have an agent. She gave me the name of a couple of agents, including her own agent. I was not successful with those agents either, however Terry MacMillan's agent liked the novel alot and although she rejected it, she recommended me to another agent who eventually signed me. Within thirty days the manuscript was circulated to twenty publishers and Dutton eventually bought it. I think alot of the initial resistance has to do with publishers not quite understanding what is going on in the Black gay world. For whatever reason, publishers have not recognized the opportunities from the successes of James Earl Hardy and E. Lynn Harris, that there's a market out there interested in this subject—they haven't quite gotten a handle on that.

VM: Right. And I guess that oversight will be an opportunity for us to start capitalizing on our own stuff and start making our own dollars and setting up those types of things that we need in our community.

DSS: Yeah, I think that's true. And I think you may see—although this is not a prediction—a repeat of what happened in the seventies and early eighties with black heterosexual women: They were having the same struggles with bringing themselves to voice and getting publishers to pay attention to them, to take them seriously, to recognize that there was a reading public out there that wanted these books. They were hugely successful—at least a few of them—and their names got catapulted out there in the limelight and from there they helped open doors for others. I think—my hope is—that something similar will be happening with black gay and lesbian writing.

VM: Definitely. Definitely. Definitely. And you're one of the ones helping to open those doors. Let me say thank you, thank you, thank you on behalf of Venus Magazine and our readership for the interview and for your example. I enjoyed speaking with you.

DSS: Thank you, it was a good interview; I enjoyed doing it.

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Seventh Annual Gay and Lesbian Business Expo

By Twyla Walling

There's strength in numbers. That's why there's a Black Gay Pride. That's why there's an AIDS Quilt. And that's why there's Business Expo '95 at the Georgia World Congress Center on October 7 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

"We started out seven years ago to show the gay and lesbian community's economic power and depth," said Expo Chair Jerrilyn Levetan. "Since then, the event has grown every year to include more regional and national companies, and it gets better every year."

The Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo '95 will include over 150 booths of gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses this year, according to Levetan. "Everybody from florists to mechanics will be there," she said, "including national companies like NationsBank and regional favorites like the Atlanta Business Chronicle."

Presented by the Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC), better known by it's acronym "Gay Buck," Expo '95 is heating up faster than ever. The hottest ticket, according to sales agent Theresa Lowery, seems to be the Retail Marketplace.

"It's an obvious growth step for us," she said, "and it further cements the idea that the gay dollar has power and it should be used whenever possible."

Attendees will not only have a chance to spend some money this year, there's a serious chance to win valuable prizes. "We're going to give away over $10,000 dollars worth of door prizes," said Levetan. "All of our exhibitors are chipping in this year."

In addition to the appearance of black owned business exhibitors, Venus Magazine is a proud sponsor this year.

"Coalition building is what we're all about," said publisher Charlene Cothran. "Both from a people of color standpoint and a gay/lesbian position, Expo gives us a chance to meet thousands of people we might never run across in the normal course of affairs."

As testament to that, Cothran points out that she has recently named Shadow Grafix, Inc., another Expo sponsor, as the designer for Venus Magazine.

"I feel great about our relationship (with Shadow Grafix)," Cothran said. "And this deal is a direct result of Expo—and we haven't even set-up our booth yet!"

"The participation of African-American businesses is crucial to the continued strength of this event," concurred GABC president Patrick Murphy. "Especially here in Atlanta, we can hardly call ourselves a community-wide event without participation from all segments of our community.

"The Expo is all about connecting businesses with the gay and lesbian consumer," he continued. "The power of African-American gay and lesbian consumers is integral to the strength of our community."

The explosive growth of gay-owned and gay-friendly business has strengthened the push for civil rights by bringing issues like domestic partners and insurance coverage into the mainstream of American life. Expo '95 is your chance to show those businesses you appreciate their efforts and reinforce the economic strength of our community.

If you are interested in adding your business to the list of exhibitors, please contact GABC at (404) 377-4258, or, you can register on-line at http://gaypride.com/gabc. However you choose to get involved, act fast. "We will sell out, this year faster than ever," according to Levetan.

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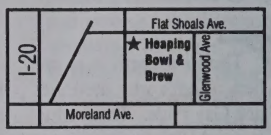

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Real Lesbians Don't Do Men

Inspired by JoJo

"I'm gay".

"But does your man know?"

In the past year I have met more lesbians with a man. Yet, when they enter the clubs, their man becomes invisible.

"Who's that?" I question one women after she brought me home.

"Oh, he's my man," she defended.

"Excuse me, while I pick my weave up from the floor!"

This game seemed oh so familiar. It reminded me of the times when I courted men; they too left out the facts: married with children. Were women now playing the same games with their pussies by failing to mention the invisible family at home?

Girlfriend then tried to convince me that she didn't sleep with her man. "Where does he sleep, in the closet?" I inquired to myself, since I only saw two bedrooms, one of which was occupied by her sons.

"I'm leaving him as soon as my boys grow up," she told me. I looked at her with a raised eyebrow, since her children were in preschool. "Why do you call yourself gay when you are actually bisexual?"

"I am anything but bisexual," she professed. "I love women," she tried to sound convincing, explaining that her man only provided the necessities of home. He paid the rent, her car note, along with the rest of her bills. But he couldn't provide her with the one thing she really needed, which was the fervor of a woman.

"What are you doing on the floor? she asked.

"Girl, I'm searching for my weave, so I can get the hell out of here?" I squealed.

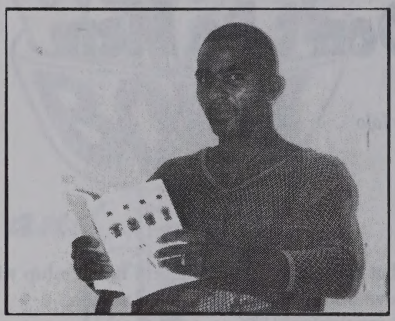
As I drove myself home, I marveled over this woman being a "real lesbian". Why had she chosen to remain undercover, hiding in the closet of life? Was it to protect her family, lifestyle, or career? Did she have the best of both worlds? How much did her man actually know about her dangerous liaisons with women? I was clueless.

"Real lesbians don't do men" kept swirling in my head. I was now beginning to question the true meaning of being gay. I thought you were bisexual if you could have a relationship with both men and women.

A lesbian with a man... now, that's gonna take some getting used to. When women meet, the common question that is often asked is, "Do you have a lover?" Should we now inquire if there is an invisible man hidden at home?

As I drove the car into the driveway, I now know what my mama meant when she said, "You can't judge a book by its cover." Just 'cause it reads lesbian, don't mean it's all about women!

Outwrite Welcomes Atlanta Black Gay Pride 1995



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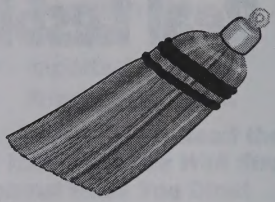

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The Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo is Presented by the Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC), a non-profit organization dedicated to the development and growth of businesses that support the lesbian and gay community.

Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo '95

Georgia World Congress Center • Atlanta, GA • Saturday, October 7, 1995 • 10 a.m. —4 p.m.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1995 Schedule

Friday, September 1 —1st Annual African-American AIDS Memorial and Candlelight Vigil. 7pm - 10pm, Free. Water Works Park. Enjoy live gospel music and community speakers. From downtown, take 75/85 north to 14th Street Exit, turn left, go to Northside Drive, make a right, go under passway, then left at Bishop Street and right on Resevoir Drive into WaterWorks Park!! 10 minutes!

Saturday, September 2—Soul to Soul Brunch, 10:30am - 2:30pm, $3.00 donation, excellent menu items. Mix and mingle, enjoy live jazz with Barry Bruce & Co. and an open mic poetry slam. Kalo's Coffee House, 1248 Clairmont Rd., Decatur.

Saturday, September 2—The Official Black Gay Pride Party kicks off at the Radisson Hotel, downtown at Courtland and International Blvd. Professional models work our runway during a New York House Music Dance. $7.00. Doors open at 10:30pm. Co-sponsored by Venus, M-Press Modeling Agency and Physikos at Ansley.

Saturday, September 2—ACT UP/Atlanta sponsors a "Georgia Ride for a Cure" from Atlanta to Savannah (end date: Sept. 7, 1995) benefitting AIDS Education Services for Minorities, AIDS Legal Project, AIDS Support, Atlanta Lesbian AIDS Project, Brothers Back to Back, Our Common Welfare, Prevention Point, Project Azuka, Inc., Sisterlove, Inc. and WISE.. Contact ACT UP/Atlanta at 404/874-6782. Pledges, Volunteers and Materials are needed.

Sunday, September 3—Prism presents Buckhead Beach Party '3', 5pm - 1am, Buckhead Towne Club. 2900 Pharr Dr. $10. Swimsuit Contest, Hourly Raffle. Call 344-6865 for details.

Sunday, September 3—Safe, Sexy, and Proud Skating Party. 11pm - 3am. Golden Glide 2750 Wesley Chapel Rd. $8 includes skate rental. Sponsored by the Men of Second Sunday benefiting African American Gay Outreach/AID Atlanta. Sisters Welcome!

Monday September 4—Hotlanta's First Close-Out Male & Female Picnic in Chastain Park (Master Grill Lot) 10 AM until Sunset. Starter Food & Beverages are Available at the Main Table. Volleball, Softball, Horse Shoes and Tennis Courts will be provided. Bring your Blankets, Lawn Chairs and Music! Presented by Shadow Production Co.

Monday September 4—First Annual Monday Madness Affair at Revolution. 293 Pharr Road, Buckhead. Doors open at 10 PM. Over $500 in Cash and Prizes, 10,000 Square Feet with Live Entertainment and Two Dynamic DJ's. Advance Tickets: $8, Door Tickets: $10. A portion of proceeds will benefir African American AIDS Organization.

Clip and Save Pocket Schedule

Atlanta.

Wednesday, August 30 and Thursday, August 31—AESM present's their First NiteClub Outreach/Donation Blitz! Help raise AIDS awareness in Atlanta's Gay and Lesbian Community while campaigning for AESM. Volunteers meet at the Otherside on Wednesday from 11 PM to 1 AM and the Pearl Garden on Thursday from 9:30 PM until midnight. Call Mark at 404/753-2900 for more details.

Thursday, August 31—MY SOUL IS A WITNESS—Dr. Gloria Wade-Gayles returns to read from her anthology MY SOUL IS A WITNESS: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY. She offers for the first time a beautiful glimpse into the Spirit that is at the heart of African American women's lives. Gloria's earlier boo, PUSHED BACK TO STRENGTH: A BLACK WOMAN'S JOURNEY HOME received national acclaim for its honest, moving portrayal of the author's spiritual journey. We are pleased, as always, to honor Gloria Wade-Gayles and her work.

Thursday, September 7—A Lady and A Woman opens at Emory University's Canon Chapel. 8:00 PM. $5, free to all students with I.D. Call 727-0270 for group reservations. Take N. Decatur Rd. to Oxford, into Emory Campus. The second major building is White Hall. Cannon Chapel is behind White Hall and has a cross on top of the building. Shows conintue Saturday the ninth at 8 PM and Sunday the tenth at 2:30 PM. The Closing Reception is at 4 PM in the Candler Library, Rm 201-B; sponsored by the Emory University Dept of African American Studies.

Saturday, September 9—Youth conference on sexual orientation: a one-day conference bringing together sexually diverse young folks, our friends, families, mentors, and peers to share our life experiences and to talk about challenges fac ing Atlanta's youth as well as discuss survival skills, support available, and what is needed to foster healthy living. Please join us. For more info, call Steve or Wendi at (404) 908-5368.

Boston.

Saturday, September 9—Third Annual Love Overboard Boat Cruise III aboard the largest twin-hulled catamaran in the New England area, the M/V Freedom. Sponsored by MOCAA. Live entertainment and a Caribbean buffet with a cash bar. Donartions are $10.00 per person. For info, call (617) 267-7766, ext. 572.

New York.

Saturday, September 2 - "Women of the '90's" presents "Our Family Reunion" (Bonnie and Clyde Reunion). Contact Bess Knowing (718) 992-9073 for more info.

Saturday, September 9 - X-Cenrics presents "an End of Summer Jam" at the South Oxford Club located at 187 South Oxford St. in Brooklyn from 11pm - 5am, tickets $30.00 in advance open bar. Featuring special guest appearances. Music by GHP. For more information & tickets contact: MD Murphy (917) 278-1649, Jackie Brantley (914) 972-3205, or Bess (718) 992-9073. Tickets go on sale July 1995!

Monday, September 1 - Saturday 16 - NJEMA announces "The Cruise of Distinction 1995!" Tour a total of five fabulous islands!! Free rum swizzles, happy ho;ur, island bar-b-que, live reggae and calypso music for 5 fabulous days aboard a Caribbean Cruise. Join us aboard the yacht "Flying Cloud." For ticket information contact Bess Knowings at (718) 992-9073.

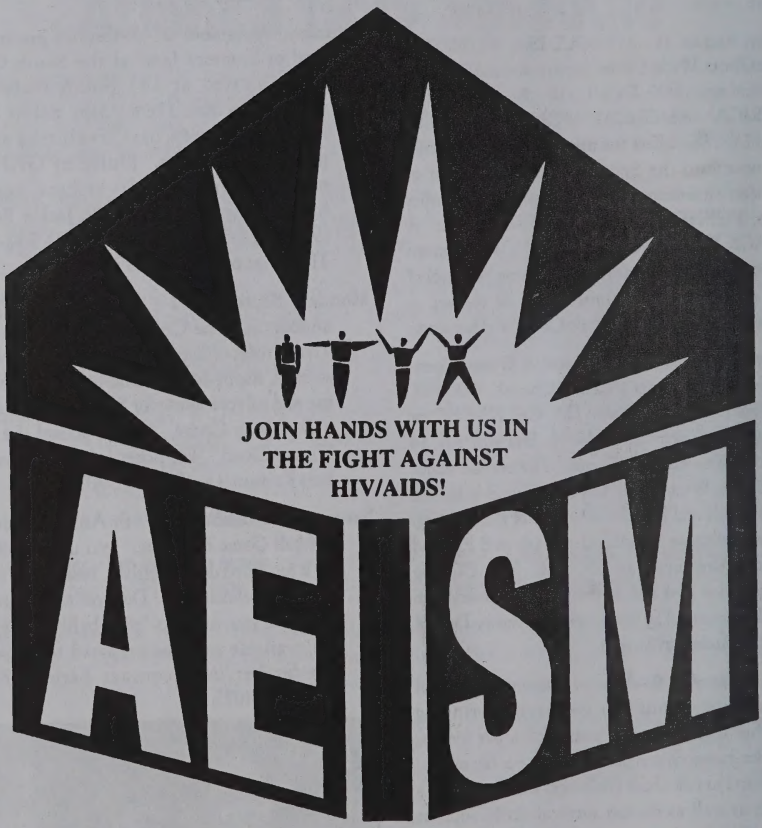
Saturday, September 16 - 4th Annual Oldtimers Softball Game & Picnic. Join us at FDR Park for a fun-filled day of softball, basketball, volleyball, and relaxation!! Dust off those bats and gloves if you want to "play ball!" Free grills are available so come prepared to barbeque! For further info, contact Barbara Rooks (718) 379-4075.

PHOTO BY: CHARLES EASLEY

Venus publisher, Charlene Cothran, and Chicago's Gwen Austin greet guests at a recent Venus fundraiser.

You've Seen Us, We've Seen You...
Now Let's See You Make a Difference!

In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.



Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

"We Love You, Love Yourself... BE SAFE!"

If you would like to volunteer, need information, or would like to make a tax deductible contribution, please contact:

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities
P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, Georgia 30337
PH: 404/753-2900 • FX: 404/752-9610

Karat's Night Club Opening This Fall

Johnnie Culbreath and Michael Holt, Midtown Atlanta residents, plan to open a rhythm and blues nightclub early in October to be located at 511 Peachtree Street, just a few blocks from the heart of downtown.

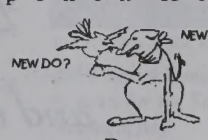
The club, according to the newly declared entrepreneurs, will feature live music several nights a week and will strive to serve a Gay African-American audience that, to date, has been under-served in this city. "Selecting music by popular African-American artists, both oldies and contemporary hits, will further characterize the bar as a comfortable, nostalgic, and diverse establishment," according to the owners.

Both Holt and Culbreath believe Atlanta is ready for an "upscale" club that dedicates itself to an audience of Lesbian and Gay African-Americans. Culbreath, a Gay African-American states, "in my own pursuit for entertainment and certainly in the pursuit of my friends, there is a strong desire for a sophisticated, but fun place to go where you can actually talk over the music level and meet people like yourself."

Holt reiterates that "we want to ensure a diverse patronage, but we are even more committed to establishing Karats as not just a business in the Black Lesbian and Gay community, but a resource as well."

Planning a full-service bar, Culbreath and Holt have arranged to feature a New Orleans talent, Mary Griffin, on vocals and Jack Fowler on key board piano. The two will perform on Saturdays and other live music will be presented on Thursdays and Fridays. Presently, the owners are auditioning for other entertainers whose style fits with the jazz or rhythm and blues flavor of the nightclub. Interested artists may write and send bios, arrangements and other information to: Karats, P.O. Box 55554, Atlanta, Georgia 30308. More information regarding Karats will be featured in the October issue of Venus.

CAT TOO!
BIRD·DOG
Spoken Here!



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SUET CAKES • HUMMINGBIRD
SUPPLIES • SQUIRREL FEEDERS
CHIMES • BINOCULARS • FIELD
GUIDES AND OTHER BOOKS • TAPES
UNIQUE GIFTS • BUTTERFLY HOUSES
LOCAL & NATIONAL ARTISTS • MORE

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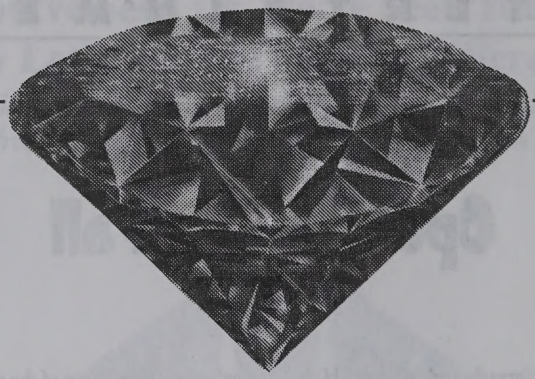


Karats Night Club

Rhythm and Blues

Live Music

and much more . . . !

Coming to 511 Peachtree Street
This October!

Watch for More Details!

Southern Town Hall Meeting

by Charlene Cothran

Phil Wilson, co-founder of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum met with over 30 Atlanta leaders at the Venus office during the first of a series of town hall meetings planned across the country.

Wilson opened by quoting a mentor, "A people not willing to step to the plate will not be taken seriously."

The meeting focused on discussing the need for autonomous Black, Lesbian and Gay organizations. Rev. Herbert Evans visiting from Philadelphia, quickly pointed to the autonomous National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum.

The NBGLLF is based in Los Angeles and is planning it's 9th Annual Conference in Dallas, February 1996. The NGBLLF exist to give technical assistance to other black gay and lesbian organizations, to provide a national voice and has a mailing list of over 10,000.

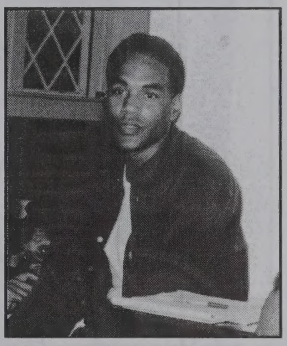


PHOTO BY: JENA P. JONES

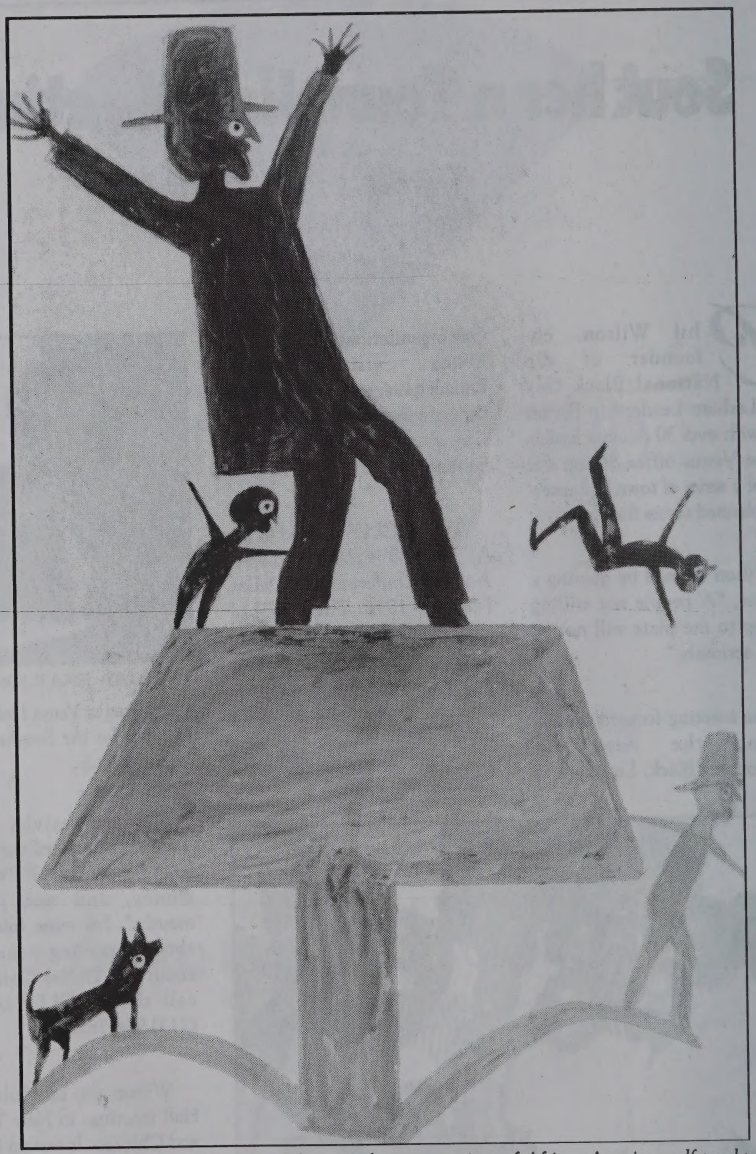
Phil Wilson at Venus Headquarters, in town for the Southern Town Meeting in July.

PHOTO BY: JENA P. JONES

Participants at the Southern Town Hall Meeting with Phil Wilson at the Venus Headquarters in July.

Atlanta activist Duncan Teague encouraged the group to support NGBLLF "with our money, and not just our mouths". For more information about becoming a member or about the Dallas Conference, call the NBGLLF office at (213) 964-7820.

Wilson also scheduled Town Hall meetings in New York city and Chicago. It was an honor to have our American hero here in Atlanta. Phil, thanks for all you do!



HIGH *Explore the accomplishments of two generations of African-American self-taught artists in the exhibition "Dust Tracks on a Road: Four Southern Artists," on view at the High Museum of Art Folk Art and Photography Galleries from August 8 through November 4, 1995. This untitled drawing by Bill Traylor is one of the featured works in this exhibition that brings together four of the most significant self-taught artists from the southern United States. For more information, call (404) 577-6940.*

GALLERY OPENINGS

Camille Love Galley presents African American Quiltmakers and the National Black Arts Festival's "Our Story" exhibit through September 15 (404)841-0446. 309 E. Paces Ferry Road Buckhead.

Hammonds House Galleries

Hammonds House introduces 75 year old, self taught artist Sandy Hall in "Front and Center" , with an opening reception Sunday Sept. 17 at 2:00pm. The Exhibit runs thru Nov. 19. Hammonds House Galleries is located at 503 Peoples St. SW, (404)752-8730.

"Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South"

"Before Freedom Came" depicts the lifes of everyday African-American men and women in the south before the Civil War. This amazing exhibit runs August 19–October 15 at the Atlanta History Museum.

Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus

Invites you to our 1995-96 Concert Season:

Saturday, December 2, 1995	*Georgia Tech Theater for the Arts*
Saturday, March 16, 1996	*performing with a guest artist, TBA*
Saturday, June 22, 1996	*performing with a guest artist, TBA*

Love to Sing? Rehearsals begin Sept. 10. No audition required.
For more information call AFWC at 438-5823

Robert Glor, Interim Director
Chantel Wright, Assistant Director

The AFWC is supported in part by the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council, the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the General Assembly, and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

BUCKHEAD BEACH PARTY '95

LABOR DAY WEEKEND

SUNDAY..SEPTEMBER 3, 1995

5pm - 1am

COMPLIMENTARY BUFFET/CASH BAR
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Atlanta will hold Revival August 24–27, nightly at 7 PM. The Sunday service will be at 2:30 PM. Other Unity Pastors plan to attend for the installation of Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee, including: Elder Zachary Jones (Unity New York), Rev. Mays (Unity Philadelphia), and members from the movement at large pastored by founder, Bishop Carl Bean. For more information, call (404) 388-4624.

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Rainey Cheeks, Bishop, Elder Zachary Jones, Rev. Jacqueline Holland.

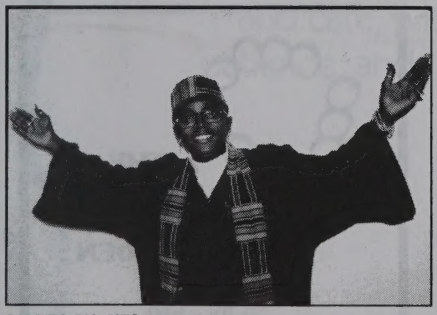

PHOTO BY: KES

Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee will be installed during revival week as Pastor of Atlanta's Unity Fellowship Church.

The Gay and Lesbian African-Americans (G.A.L.A.) would like to thank the Sacramento Community, The Mirage, Lambda Community Center, Andante Marketing and the volunteers for your donations and contributions to a successful Afrocentric Weekend Celebration (July 21-23, 1995). The event's success included a twenty eight meal donations to one of Sacramento's local homeless shelters. Our organization looks forward to seeing you at our next event.

Sunday, September 10, 17, and 24, 4 PM—The Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus welcomes new and returning members to its 1995-96 season. New members may join without an audition by attending rehearsals on these dates at the First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr. W who would like to be part of AFWC, but do not like to sing, are encouraged to join the AFWC Auxiliary. For more information, please call 438-5823, or write to: AFWC, P.O. Box 8480, Atl, GA 30306

James Earl Hardy, author of the best-seller B-Boy Blues presents his latest work, **SPIKE LEE A Biography** (from Chelsea house). Copies of this exciting examination of one of america's premiere black film makers are available from the author himself! To order yours send a check or money order to: James Earl Hardy, 485 First Avenue, Suite 16E, NY, NY 10016 $22.00 (18.95 per hardback plus postage) or $10.00 (7.95 per paperback plus postage)

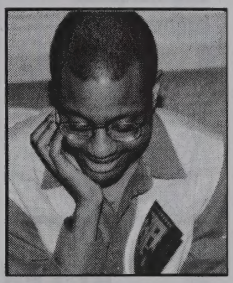

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

James Early Hardy

The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus is looking for male singing members for all voice parts for their 1995-96 Fifteenth Anniversary Season. For information on auditions and rehearsal please call 698-8138 to schedule audition.

NIGHTLIFE

BARS	LOCATION	BEST NITE	MIX	MUSIC
WAREHOUSE (TRAXX)	306 Luckie St. 404/577-9510	Saturday	Men . . . . . 80% Women . . . 20%	House
Waterworks Cafe	111 Luckie St. 404/577-7059	Sun & Fri.	Men . . . . . 70% Women . . . 30%	R&B, Show House
Pearl Garden	111 Luckie St. 404/524-0036	Thursday	Men . . . . . 95% Women 5%	R&B, Show
The Marquette Lounge	M.L. King Jr. Dr. 404/526-7677	Saturday	Men . . . . . 50% Women . . . 50%	Top 40, R&B, Show
LORETTA'S	708 Spring St. 404/874-8125	Fri, Sat.	Men . . . . . 60% Women . . . 40%	House

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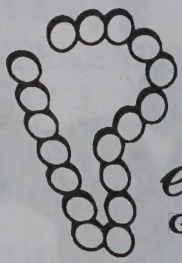

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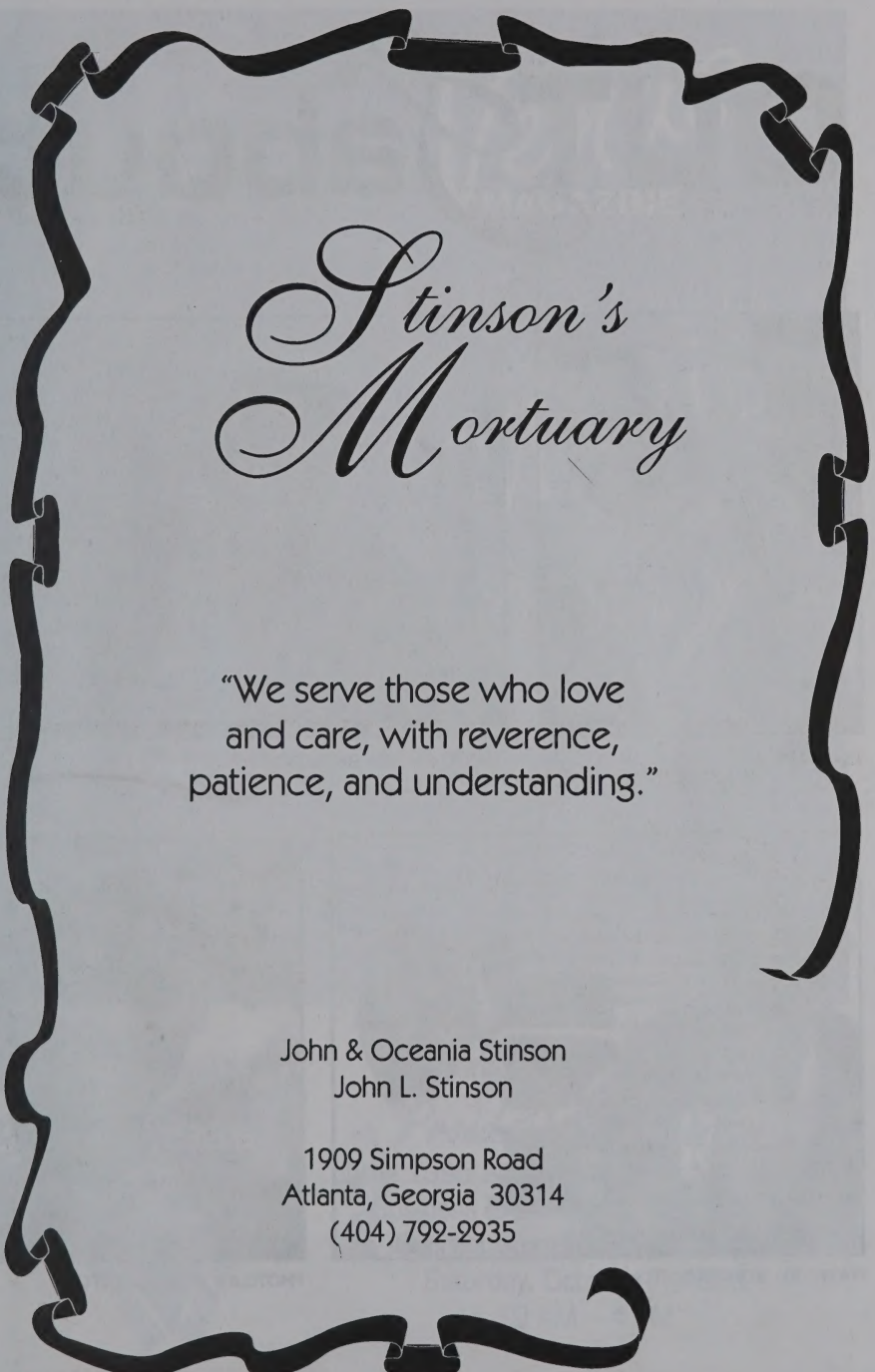
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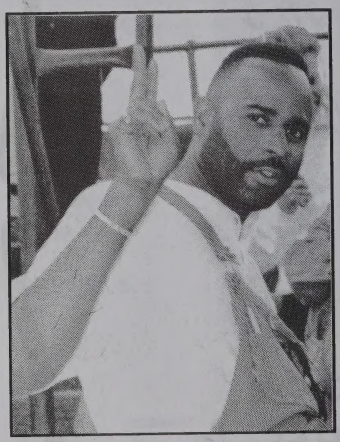
OUT & about



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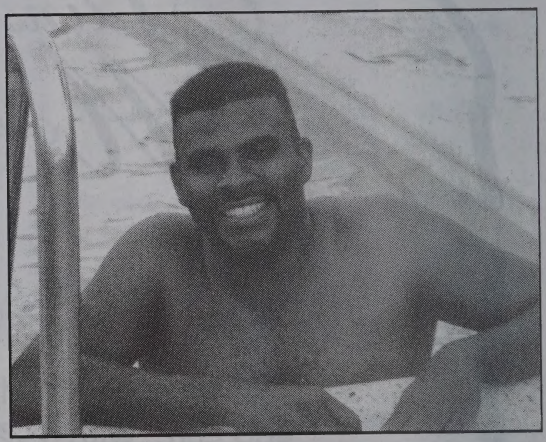

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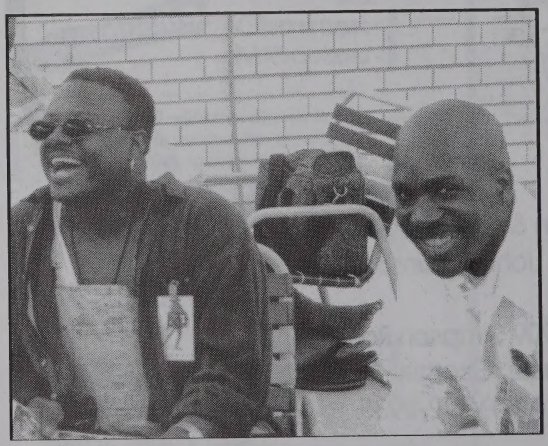

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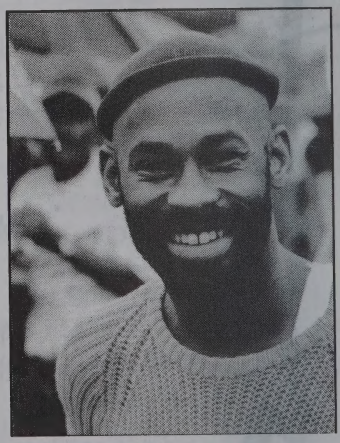

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

SOUTHEASTERN LESBIAN & GAY
Business
EXPO
95
Oct 7 - GA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER
GREATER ATLANTA BUSINESS COALITION

Venus Magazine is a
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of the 1995 Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo. Come see us at the Georgia World Congress Center
Saturday, October 7, 1995
10 AM – 4 PM

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians With Children—(404) 498-3815.

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., New York, New York 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

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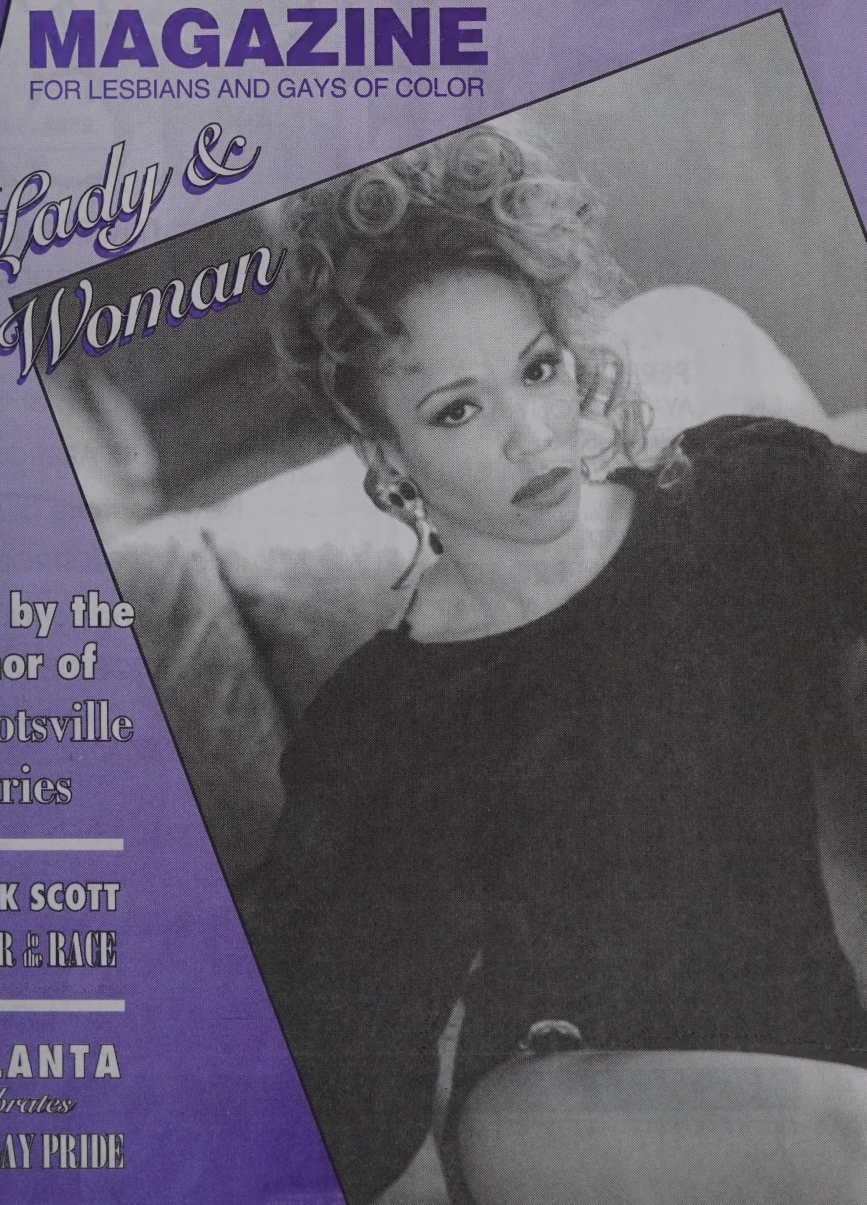

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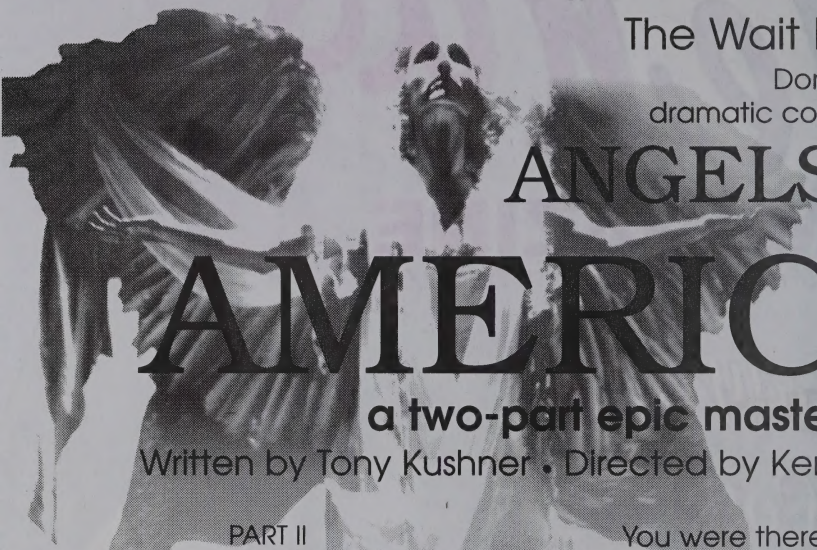

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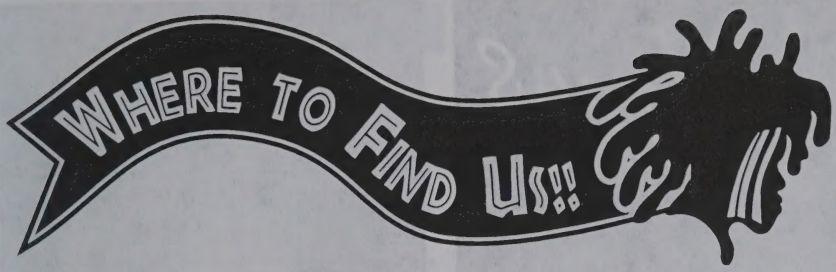

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August/September 1995
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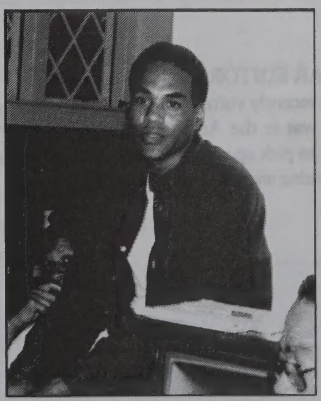
Black Gay Pride is Coming!

A Lady and A Woman Strikes Home



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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR:

I recently learned about your magazine through an article in the June 1995 issue of Sojourner. As an African American lesbian, I am thrilled to find out that there is literature specifically addressing issues relating to being African-American and gay. I would appreciate any information you could send me on how to obtain your magazine. Thank you very much!

Michelle Smith
Worcester, MA

DEAR EDITOR:

My name is LaRhonda Slaughter, I'm a 27 black lesbian. I have been "out of the closet" for almost 2 years. In that time I have been unable to make friends with other lesbians. Some are snooty, stuck-up, think they are above everyone else. I was hoping you could tell me where I could find some (Los Angeles, Long Beach and surrounding areas) down-to-earth gay and lesbian people.

LaRhonda Slaughter

DEAR EDITOR:

I recently visited your fair city for a family reunion and was at the Atlanta Underground Mall and was able to pick up your magazine. Besides my family this magazine was a welcome sight. Thank you.

Guy Madison
Sacramento, CA

DEAR EDITOR:

I was so excited to see the magazine VENUS here in the New York City area, and also all the wonderful people you have supporting it. We had many conversations about how to bring about positive change and empowerment to our southern communities. Keep up the great work and if I can be of service please call on me.

United through diversity,

Maurice O'Brian Franklin
New York, New York

DEAR EDITOR:

I first read a copy of your publication about two months ago and I was quite impressed. It was very enlightening and positive. I am very familiar with Atlanta, and this is even a greater sign of the strength of the African-America Gay and Lesbian Community in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

I am interested in receiving your magazine on a regular basis, since I feel that there is so much that I am missing.

Also being a young African-American professional, who is continually striving for excellence, if there is any way I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

Gregory B. West
Winston-Salem, NC

DEAR EDITOR:

While on vacation in the beautiful city of Cincinnati, Ohio, I had the pleasure of reading your magazine.

Keep up the good work!

Selene S. McNairy

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:..... Joy Barnes

Age:..... 51

Status:..... Extremely Attached

Career:..... Advertising & Marketing Executive

Hometown:.. New York

Latest Book:. "Won't Give Nothing For My Journey Now" by Maya Angelou

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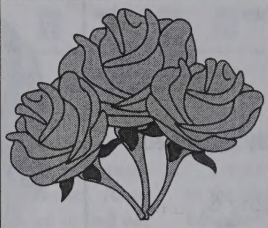

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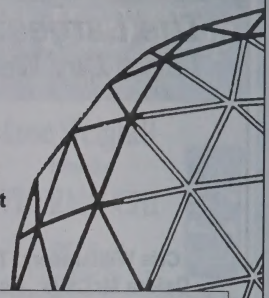

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A Lady and A Woman

Interview with Dr. Shirlene Holmes

By Eve Wernicky

It was perhaps her darkest moment. The bout with cancer had made everything uncertain, disruptive. But on her deathbed, the culmination of the lessons she had learned and lived prompted her to react the only way she knew how:

"I think death is a choice and I'm not done yet, I still have work to do."

So Atlanta-based playwright Dr. Shirlene Holmes, 37, fought her way back to health last year and like the characters in her plays and stories, she typifies the complex multi-faceted strong African-American women she writes about.

"I am not the same person," Holmes said, her voice full of rich cadence. "I live in immediate time. I think more locally."

And her new vigor about her work has been centralized in sending a clear message; touching her audiences and providing them a profoundly uplifting experience.

But instead of thrusting a cantankerous militant tone on issues surrounding homosexuality, women and the African-American experience, she simply lets the work speak for itself.

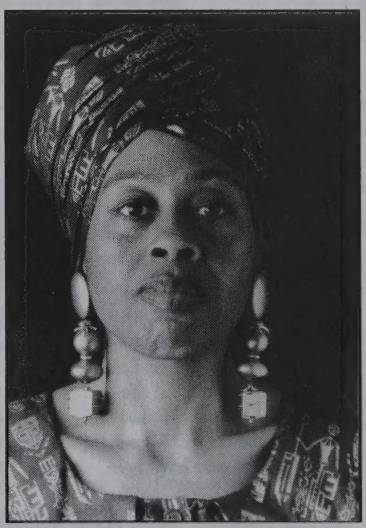
Her latest is the play, "A Lady and A Woman," which follows two African-American women at the end of the 19th century in their search for courage and a new life in a small town.

"The play celebrates so much and is very dear to me. It is my 'Color Purple,' "said the Georgia State University communications professor.

It is set to be published by Applause Books and an excerpt was performed at the recent Washington D.C. Gay Pride celebration.

The two central characters, Biddie Higgins, an emotionally-inclined butcher, and Miss Flora Divine, an inn owner/healer/midwife, eventually begin a spiritual love affair, and heal and soothe each other through humor, intimacy, faith and disclosure.

Sondra Barrie, the acclaimed actress who reprises her role as Miss Flora in the Emory University production (playing Sept. 7, 9, 10 at Cannon Chapel) has been in several of Holmes' plays and called her characters intense and powerful.



Dr. Shirlene Holmes, author of "A Lady and a Woman" and "The Cotsville Stories."

"(Miss Flora) is a challenging character to play," Barrie said. "From the field of spiritual connectedness, she is full of pain yet has a lot of humor about life and the life she's lived. All of Shirlene's characters are strong, in touch with who they are and honest about where they are going."

And who these characters are come from Holmes' experience and women-dominated upbringing.

"I feel my work is very much of my experience. Being African-American is dramatic, real life is profound and dramatic," Holmes said.

Brenda Porter, starring in the role of Biddie in "A Lady and a Woman" by Dr. Shirlene Holmes.

Venus Magazine: Do you think your characters branch from your path of self-discovery?

Shirlene Holmes: "I don't think art comes from one place. I see Miss Flora as myself, but she is also a lot of women. I always portray characters with dimension in my life that have been profound."

VM: Your acclaimed *Cotsville Stories*, a collection of fictional vignettes — some which have been featured in previous Venus issues — seems to center around small-town Southern folk much like some of your other work.

SH: "I've always been enthralled by regular folk because they learn so much from living. And I've always loved the Southern flair because you can say a whole lot with twisted English. Southerners seem to capture passion and I hope to try to make people feel affirmed."

VM: You grew up in a matriarch on the southside of Queens, New York. What is the most important lesson you learned from your mother?

SH: "That God is. My mother would pray and things would happen. She was a single mother at 19, but was determined that we do better than she did. Not attending college was unquestionable looked up to her. I learned how to be feminine from her — not just the lace stockings, but the importance of being a woman."

"I think every woman has the capacity of being feminine, having grace, being a healer as well as being powerful — able to carry the load. I cannot worry about attaching labels to oneself. God is male and female. We all have a balance."

VM: How essential is the concept of spirituality to your work?

SH: "Spirituality is essential to my existence. For most people, sexuality is their first identity. It certainly is not mine. I don't think I'm a lesbian before I'm black or a woman. Once you are in the spirit, there is no gender, no black or white. We are whole."

Dr. Holmes will lecture at Emory's Dobbs University Center on Thursday, Sept. 7, 1995 at 4:00 PM in Room 220. She will read from *The Cotsville Stories* and other works.

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer and a former journalist of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Sondra Barrie, starring in the role of Ms. Flora Divine in "A Lady and a Woman" by Dr. Shirlene Holmes.

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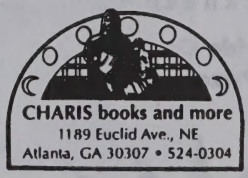

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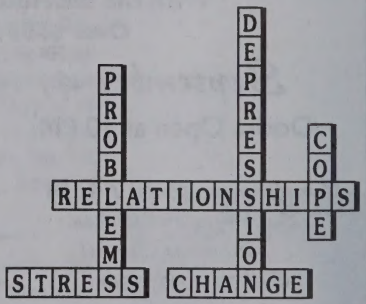

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Racism Under the Rainbow

By Beryl Jackson (B.J.) Part III of III

For some time, I've wondered what the Atlanta gay and lesbian community is doing about its internal racism? There seems to be a general awareness of the separateness in the community, yet a deafening silence about its existence. With no foreseeable time as to when we would start talking about it. I seized the opportunity I had to set up a public forum. I began by talking to people I know and don't know about getting together and talking about racism in the gay and lesbian community. The end result was a Charis Thursday night program held at the first Existentialist Congregation on July 27th. The program was co-sponsored by Charis and various organizations in the community. The program was held in the form of a community meeting and is the first in a series of dialogues within the community which asked, explored, and answered questions concerning racism in the gay and lesbian community.

The meeting was attended by over 150 people and the discussion centered around many forms of racism and racist attitudes within the community. One of the ways we were asked to look at racism was the presentation of the gay and lesbian community and who's in that picture. The speaker emphasized that the lack of "people of color" in the picture meant all "people of color" not just African Americans. This was a point that was to be repeated many times through the night, that racism is not just an issue between blacks and whites.

Another speaker said she believed individuals must do things about racism not the community, meaning white people must challenge other white people about their racist attitudes and statements and be backed up by whites who agree with the challenge. She said she believed it must begin with individual consciousness.

The differences among people and the importance of accepting these differences was talked about. We were told by one Native American who said she grew up on a reservation that "assimilation equals distinction" in her mind.

The issue of how people of color are asked to join this protest march or come to this rally to stop homophobic legislature and why nothing is being said about the current attack on affirmative action which is a racist attack on freedom in this country was also addressed. The white community was asked why there is no organizing around this issue. The answer was that the challenge for white people is to get involved in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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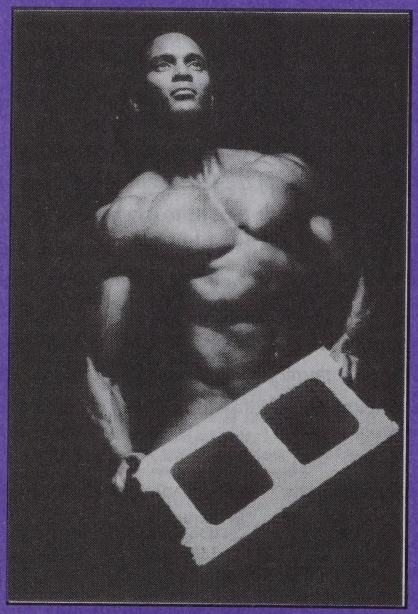

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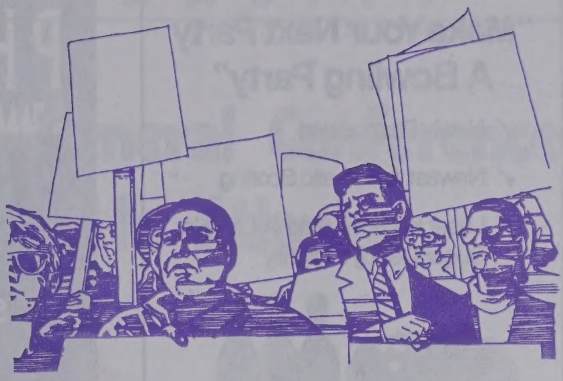
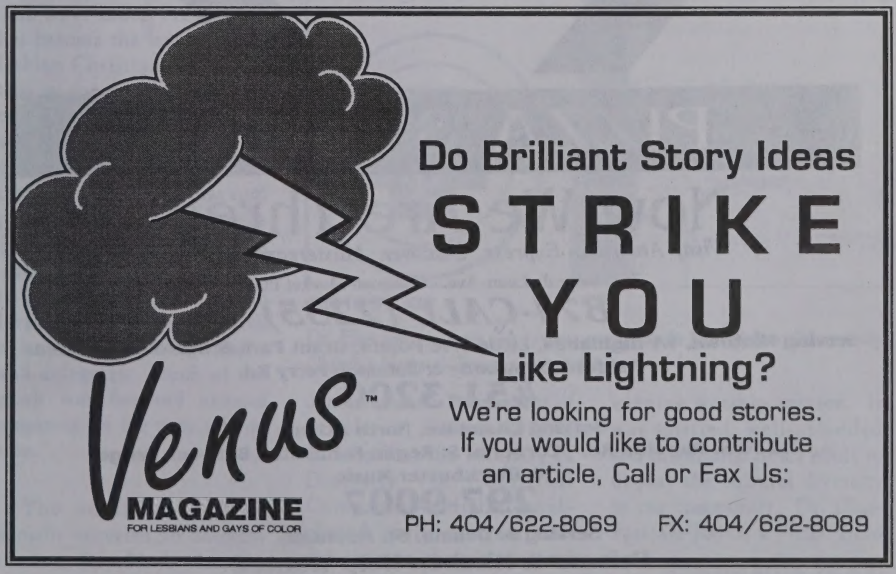
issues that don't directly involve them.

One of the most important lessons for me took place in front of mine and everyone else's eyes. A young woman rose to speak about the complicity of racism and how she felt we had all just viewed an act of racism and no one challenged it. She referred to an announcement that had been given by another young black woman and co-worker and the fact that a white man got up and restated everything the woman had just said. She asked that white people address the issue so that the man could feel supported in challenging his racism. The point being made was that the woman had put out the information eloquently and there was no need for it to be validated by the white male. Black people are capable of doing things, making decisions without it being approved by whites. This raised the defenses of the



man who proclaimed immediately he was not a racist but who called the next morning to say he'd learned a lot at the meeting and was thankful it was held.

Although I was glad to see so many people at the forum and felt that everyone had taken something of importance with them from it and despite the fact people expressed the desire to do it again and want to do it on a regular basis, there is a sadness within me due to the fact that this is 1995 and this seems to be just the first step in a very long process. When does the rainbow really become inclusive of everyone and when does a picture of the gay and lesbian community in Atlanta represent all spectrums of the rainbows within this community. When do we stop all the talking and simply DO IT!!!!



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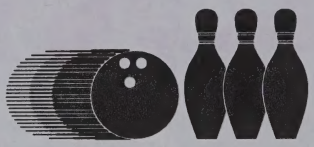

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UFMCC 17th General Conference Convenes In Atlanta

The Seventeenth General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches convened at the Westin Peachtree Hotel in Atlanta, July 23-30, 1995 with the theme "All Things are Possible!" The 27-year-old denomination that evolved from a meeting of 12 concerned individuals who embraced the dream of it's founder and moderator, The Rev. Elder Troy Perry, has become the largest gay & lesbian Christian denomination in the world. There are over 400 congregations worldwide, reaching out to disenfranchised gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual persons in the context of the Christian Church. The gathering in Atlanta was historic in many ways. It was the largest-ever attended, with more than 2,000 registrants and delegates. Much of the work was focused around preparing for the next generation.

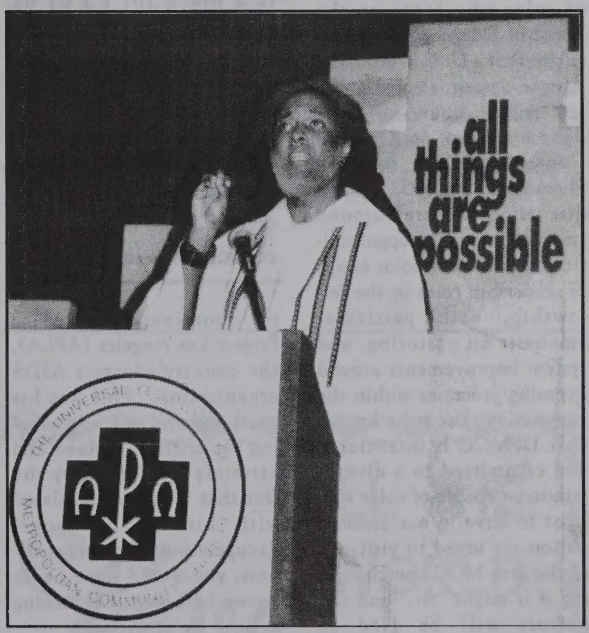


PHOTO BY: KES

Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones was keynote speaker at the Metropolitan Community Church's National Convention in Atlanta.

The unofficial kick-off actually occurred on Saturday evening, July 22nd, when the denomination's Department of People of Colors—DPOC (now called the Ministry of Diversity in Spiritual Community—MDISC) welcomed early arrivals and delegates in their traditional evening worship service. It was spirited, well-attended and intentional in it's effort to display the cultural diversity in our community. Dr. Elias-Farajaje-Jones, a Ph.D. from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

Howard University, Washington, D.C. in its Department of Religion, delivered a powerful sermon entitled "Let the Dead Bury the Dead." Spectacular music was provided by the Gospel choir of MCC Washington, D.C., a 30-voice group comprised largely of African American gay and lesbian people.

An African American Leadership Caucus was convened on Monday, July 24th, led by Rev. Elder Darlene Garner, one of three persons of color who serve on the Board of Elders. Rev. Garner is the first elder of primarily African-descent elected to the governing board of the denomination at General Conference XVI held in Phoenix, AZ in 1993. A frank discussion occurred around issues of improving opportunities for people of color clergy in leadership roles in the fellowship, with particular emphasis on pastoring, and system improvements around licensing processes within the community. Let it be known that UFMCC is intentional and committed to a diverse ministry. People of color who want to serve in our denomination are urged to visit one of the area MCC churches, to see if it might "fit," and the pastors will be glad to acquaint you with opportunities to serve!

First MCC-Atlanta dedicated their new sanctuary on Sunday, July 23rd with great fanfare. Moderator of UFMCC, The Rev. Elder Troy Perry preached; most of the Elders were present. The worship was spiritually-deep and the music stunning, and unbelievable. They are located at 1370 Tullie Rd. NE. Visit them soon.

On Wednesday, July 26th, the DPOC/MDISC Luncheon featured Mr. Phil Wilson of Los Angeles, CA, public-policy coordinator for AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), the country's largest AIDS organization. Phil was his usual powerful self, encouraging yet critical, focused and certainly challenged by the fact that a Latino translated with him as he spoke. Recuperating from earlier illness, you would have never known he'd been sick, looking at him! He's gorgeous!

Many people have asked me why I'm not in an all-black denomination like Unity. I believe that there is a place for all of us everywhere. We must seek to be where we are called to be. It's important for them to have me there, reminding them of the continuing challenge to diversify and remain fully committed to inclusion.

Thursday's AIDS Luncheon was keynoted by Ms. Dorothy Triplett, who is the Assistant Director for Minority and Other Special Populations for the Office of the Associate Director for HIV/AIDS, at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. I've heard Dorothy speak before. She challenged us with her spiritually-based philosophy, and always being able to impart current knowledge abut the movement of the disease in our community.

There were several diversity-focused workshops offered us a part of a tremendous bank of learning opportunities. I shared in one entitled "Same Enemy—Different Target." We focused on learning how to cope with the so-called "Christian Right."

On Saturday, we marched to the King Center to place a wreath of remembrance at the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was an incredible sight to see hundreds of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people marching through "the 'hood," rainbow banners blowing, respectfully and curiously being looked at by the residents. It was an amazing, impressive sight, and deeply moving when we stood in front of Martin's crypt and said, "Thank You."

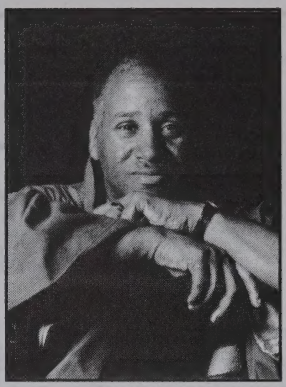
UFMCC is currently negotiating the purchase of a new $3 million headquarters in West Hollywood, CA. It is a wonderful piece of property that will enable us to meet the needs of our community for years to come. Rev. Perry challenged us to double the size of congregations, large and small, and to "get on-line." We are an internet-active community on-line for the future and preparing for the next generation. Contributions to the Capital Campaign to raise

funds for the building can be made, tax-deductible, to the current fellowship office located at 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

I am proud to be in UFMCC. Many people have asked me why I'm not in an all-black denomination like Unity. I believe that there is a place for all of us everywhere. We must seek to be where we are called to be. It's important for them to have me there, reminding them of the continuing challenge to diversify and remain fully committed to inclusion. We live in a multi-cultural world, with many different kinds of people. We need to appreciate our diversity and come to know that in the Divine Creator's mind, "There's Room at the Table for ALL!"

Well, that's UFMCC's 17th General Conference in a nutshell from this writer's perspective! Thanks, "Hotlanta" for being a proud host. In 1997, we go international, convening General Conference 18 in Sydney, Australia! May the God of your Understanding be with you and empower you to be all that you can be as you journey forward.

Rev. Herbert E. Evans is the Member Services Director at We The People, and AIDS advocacy-group in Philadelphia, PA. He is transfer-clergy in UFMCC and serves the denomination in a variety of capacities in AIDS Ministry and other designated committee work. He travels, speaks often about AIDS/HIV, recovery issues, and



Rev. Herbert E. Evans

of course, his passion, spirituality. He and his partner Mr. Todd Conway, live lovingly together in a fashionable apartment in South Philadelphia. We welcome Rev. Evans to Venus Magazine as a contributing writer!

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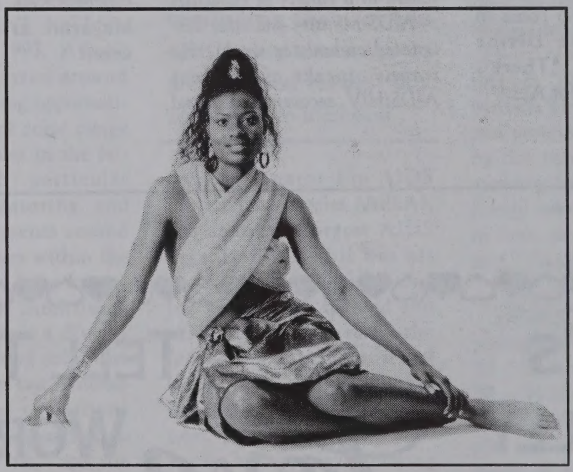

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Labels

By Nyack Feliz

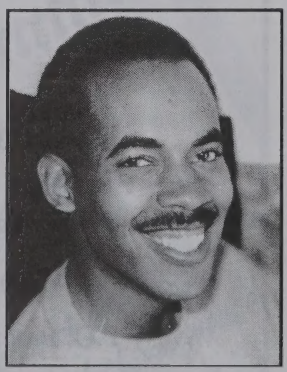
Black, Puerto rican, Latino, Gay, Fag, Negro, Maricon, Pato, Loca, these and others have all been "labels" that people have used to try and put me in a category. People have a tendency to want everything wrapped up in a pretty little package, with a bow and a card. Whenever something doesn't fit into one of our stereotypes we automatically dismiss it, or try to beat it into something we can recognize, and call it a name. In the process, we end up labeling ourselves, giving ourselves names, beating ourselves to fit into something everyone else can recognize. My question is, do we need them?

When I first came to the United States, as a young 18 year old private in the Army, I was confronted with the task of identifying myself. Not only did I have to go through what every young gay person has to endure, but I also had to figure out what I was. This was something that I was not used to, having to define myself on the basis of my color and origin. I honestly did not know there was a difference between being black and being Puerto rican. I was both, in my eyes, but it wasn't enough, it was not the same to be African American or Hispanic.

I distinctly remember the first time I actually had to think about this issue. A fellow man of color came up to me and asked, "so what are you, black or Puerto rican." For a moment, I hesitated, the question was not clear to me at that time. He saw me thinking about it and dismissed me as some brother trying to sell out. I couldn't even understand English very well, never mind this concept of separating myself into categories and to choose which one was more important. For a long time after that incident, I felt the need to define myself. But no matter what I did to find some comfortable middle ground were I could fit, people always found some other category, some new twist to the labeling game.

Panamanian, Turkish, French, Dominican, Top, Bottom, are just a few of the never ending niches that people keep finding to put me in. Mind you that I am not free of sin myself. I too find comfortable names for certain kinds of people with certain kinds of looks. Its something that happens without even thinking about it, and this is what scares me. Have we gotten so predictable that we can tell what someone is just by their appearance? Is it fair to limit ourselves by our vision? I think not.

It has been a long time since I first boarded that plane heading to the land of opportunity, and I have learned a great deal. It really doesn't matter what people think I am, as long as I know, and as long as I am comfortable with it. People can look at me and think what ever they want, but if they can't get past the initial impression, then they will never know of the hidden treasures that lay inside. It will be their loss. So, do we need these labels? That is not up to me to decide. Look within yourself, I am sure the answer is there.



"Labels" author Nyack Feliz

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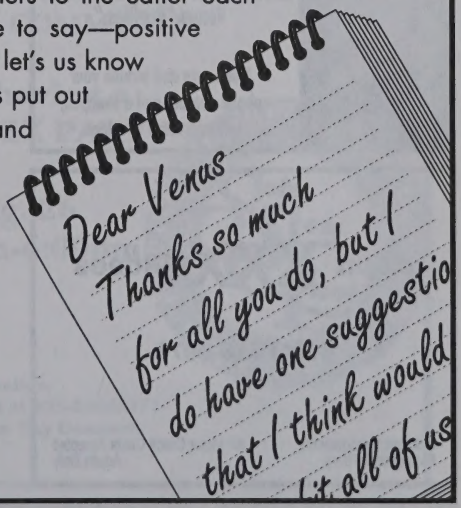
Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



Keep Writing Those Letters

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Gregory Victorianne

Age:..... 35

Status:..... Single

Career:..... Community Educator

Hometown:.. Chicago, IL

Latest Book:. "Afrekete: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Writing" by Catherine McKinley

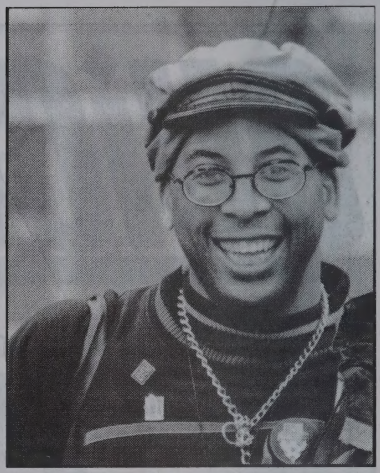

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Gregory resides in Roxbury, Mass., and serves as a public policy coordinator and community educator for MOCAA, Men of Color Against AIDS. He most enjoys collecting Afro-Caribbean artifacts and listening to his favorite Incognito CD's.

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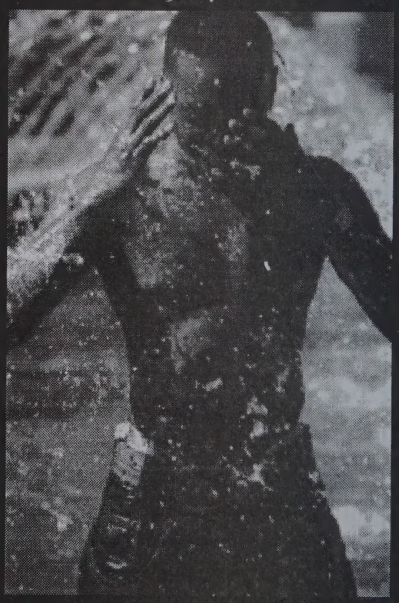

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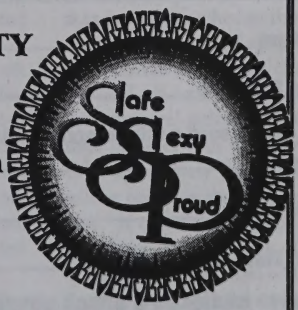

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2) **Have you ever donated money or goods to an African-American AIDS Organization?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

3) **How often do you volunteer for any nonprofit organization?**

☐ 2-4 Hrs./Wk. ☐ 2-4 Hrs./Mo.

☐ 2-4 Hrs./Yr. ☐ None

4) **How many African-American gay men or lesbians do you know who are HIV+?**

☐ 1 - 4 ☐ 5 - 9 ☐ more than 10

5) **If you were available to donate your time, what type skills do you have to give?**

☐ Legal Advice ☐ Entertainer ☐ Promoter

☐ Domestic/Housekeeper ☐ Administrative/Organizer

☐ Medical/Psychological ☐ Driver/Deliveries

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☐ Cook ☐ Builder/Handyman/woman

Stroking the Flames: Intimacy Enhancement Tips

By Carla Anderson, MA

Some of us are under the impression that if we seek counseling then we must really be in crisis. This is especially true if we are in a relationship and couples' therapy is suggested or recommended (or even threatened). However, there are many non-crisis issues that may land a couple in therapy. A relationship that continues over a long period of time may eventually hit a sensuality speedbump. In other words, the happy couple is cruising along in that beginning happy blissful honeymoon period when BAM! Suddenly one wants to be intimate more while the other one less or maybe even not at all. Friday and Saturday nights isn't predictably spent making love anymore and you are lucky if you get a peck on the check from your lover who used to kiss you from head to toe increased communication is needed at this time to take the relationship to the next level if it is to continue to be a source of fulfillment for each of the parties involved.

There are some activities that we can engage in with our partner to get the juices going again and stoke the flames of sensuality. Many of these are found in self-help books on sexuality and romance. Other suggestions are from couples who have happily discovered them on their own. A first step the couple can take is to make dates with each other so that certain days of the week or month are designated as days just for couple stuff. This is especially helpful for couples involving children or a partner that travels a lot for business. During these dates, the focus of the conversation should be similar to what we used to talk about when dating. That is, focusing on finding out more about one another, especially sexually. There are a number of different reference points we can use to get the conversation going. One is using the history that had developed thus far between our partner and ourselves. We can reminisce about a recent encounter or reinforce to our partner what we enjoyed about past experiences. This is also the optimum time to talk about what you would like differently or new. Try to avoid talking about sexual likes and dislikes in the bedroom. It works best if it is in a setting where our partner does not feel immediate pressure to perform or could feel criticized.

Another subject one can talk about on their date are each other's fantasies. One should first check in with their partner if talking about fantasies with one another would make them extremely uncomfortable. If not, then this is generally an area that couples can have fun and frolic. Fantasies repertoire. Again it does not matter whether the fantasy involves a faceless person one's partner or the cute clerk at the mall. If each partner makes the other feel welcome to share their fantasies with one another, then more likely the playmate will be ourselves and not anyone else. If one finds they have a completely empty rolodex of fantasies, then we can share with our partner what we have heard about or seen in the media arena

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

that we found titillating. This again could lead into what we would like to try, experiment with or just talk about in more detail.

This leads to another enhancement tip: phone sex. Often, most of us work and some of us work and some of us work two jobs. What better way to connect with each other during those 10-12 hour days than via the telephone. Of course, discretion is highly advised. There is no better way for your co-workers to know you more than you would like than if your conversation is inadvertently broadcast throughout the store or office. However, if privacy is available, one could tease, tempt and entice one's partner or the excitement could be the build up to designated date night or the upcoming weekend. Many couples report that once they were able to separate pleasuring each other verbally from the actual act, they then felt more freedom to express themselves.

If phone fantasies are a little bit too risky for some of us then leaving our lovers notes, poems or letters may feel more comfortable. These can be both hidden or placed out in the open. Some suggested places are the bedroom, the bathroom mirror, one's car, the briefcase or purse (or backpack) the refrigerator or the underwear drawer. Wherever one feels one could catch their partner by surprise without embarrassing them would be a good place. One could even get high tech and leave them a voice mail, fax them a coded or blatant message or leave them an e-mail on their desktop or laptop. Some couples have even designated codes they leave each other on their pagers that quickly bring a smile to their face even in a crowded board room or department store floor.

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Another suggested way of letting our partner know we are thinking about them when we are not around is to buy romantic books, magazines or articles for one another to read. The subject matter could range from the mildly romantic to the highly erotic. Also discretely, one could leave copies of highlighted passages for our favorite person. In addition, a book or magazine could be left open to just the right page for our lover to come across. Other couples have found that reading to one another enhances their sensuality. Creating a physical mood along with 'storytime' could increase the overall effect. Some suggested settings could include a bubble bath, a dimly lit living room with plenty of comfortable pillows, incense or candles. Achieving comfort in a potentially awkward situation may increase the chances of a repeat reading.

One final suggestion involves an overall attitude shift so that, again, the relationship can proceed to the next level. This is to re-examine each other's definition of sex and sensuality. Do both just focus on the act or have to be conclude by it. If so, then expanding one's horizon may help to alleviate boredom and open up many other avenues. By including in our definition of sex the acts of just holding just caressing, just massaging, just kissing or just whatever, then the concept becomes much more expanded. That is not a typographical error that I utilized the word just so many times instead, it is to emphasize that with sensuously enhancing a relationship comes not just thinking of more creative positions but more creative options. Remember, our biggest sex organ is between our ears. It is the inclusion of all our senses in this dance that could open many doors for the couple who happily discovers them.

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Black Gay Pride Atlanta '95

by Charlene Cothran

Although no 'formal' committee has surfaced to organize Atlanta's Black Gay Pride celebration, a seriously exciting weekend is being planned by a few of Atlanta's black gay and lesbian businesses.

Of course everybody knows that the children flood into Atlanta every Labor Day weekend from all over the country. So what makes this Labor Day special?! Maybe it's the excitement surrounding the '96 Olympic Games. Maybe it's the freedom and Pride we feel having our own publication. Maybe it's the heat and we've just all gone crazy!! What ever it is has got the kids primping and planning!

The first African-American AIDS memorial and candlelight vigil is the only place to be on the weekends opening night, Friday, Sept. 1, 7pm-10pm. This event will take place at the intimate Water Works Park, only minutes from downtown. We'll celebrate the memory of our fallen brothers and sisters as we wave and bop to the live music of Atlanta's hottest gospel music ensemble Charese Stephens and B. Chase William's. The finale will be performed by the duet of Collette Robinson (formerly of Moca) and Jomandi's J. Karen Thomas, who brought the house down at this years Atlanta Gospel Music Awards. Since AIDS is a disease that affect people from ALL walks of life, it is totally appropriate to encourage your friends, coworkers and family to attend.

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Mandy Carter (r) and Pat Hussain (l) at this year's National Black Gay Pride in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday morning, though, you definitely want to leave your mother at home and press your way to Kalo's Coffee House for our Soul to Soul Brunch. Enjoy soft jazz, live, by Barry Bruce and Co. and an open mic poetry SLAM from 10:30am-2:30pm. A delectable menu is available. Who knows , you may even find a dazzling date for the evening.

O.K. it's Saturday nite! Your looking great! Feeling good and smelling delicious! Where are you headed? Everybody's first stop is the Radisson Hotel for the official Black Gay Pride Atlanta Party! Hot models work the runway in the latest club attire during a New York style house party! Door opens at 11:00pm. The event is sponsored by Venus Magazine, M-Press Modeling Agency and Physikos at Ansley.

Check out the national events calendar (on page 40) for activities and always remember to PLAY SAFE!!

BLACK GAY PRIDE ATLANTA 1995

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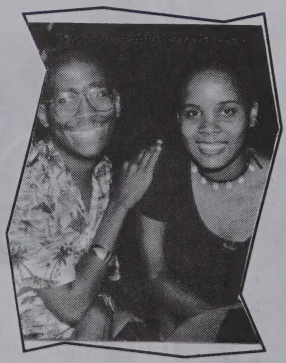

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SATURDAY SEPT. 2

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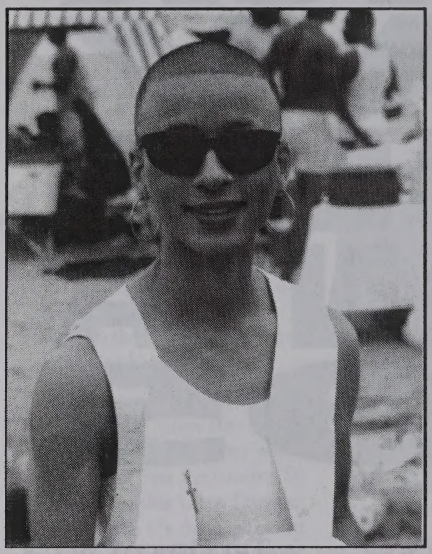

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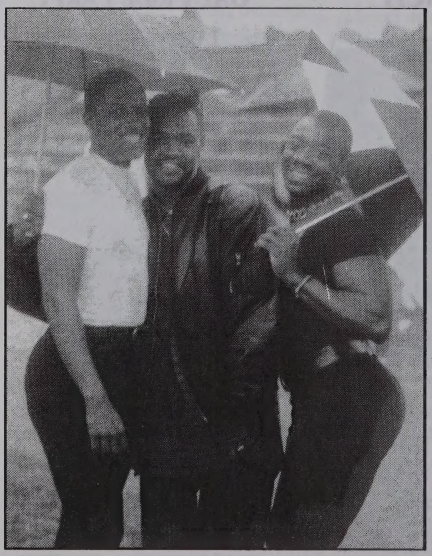

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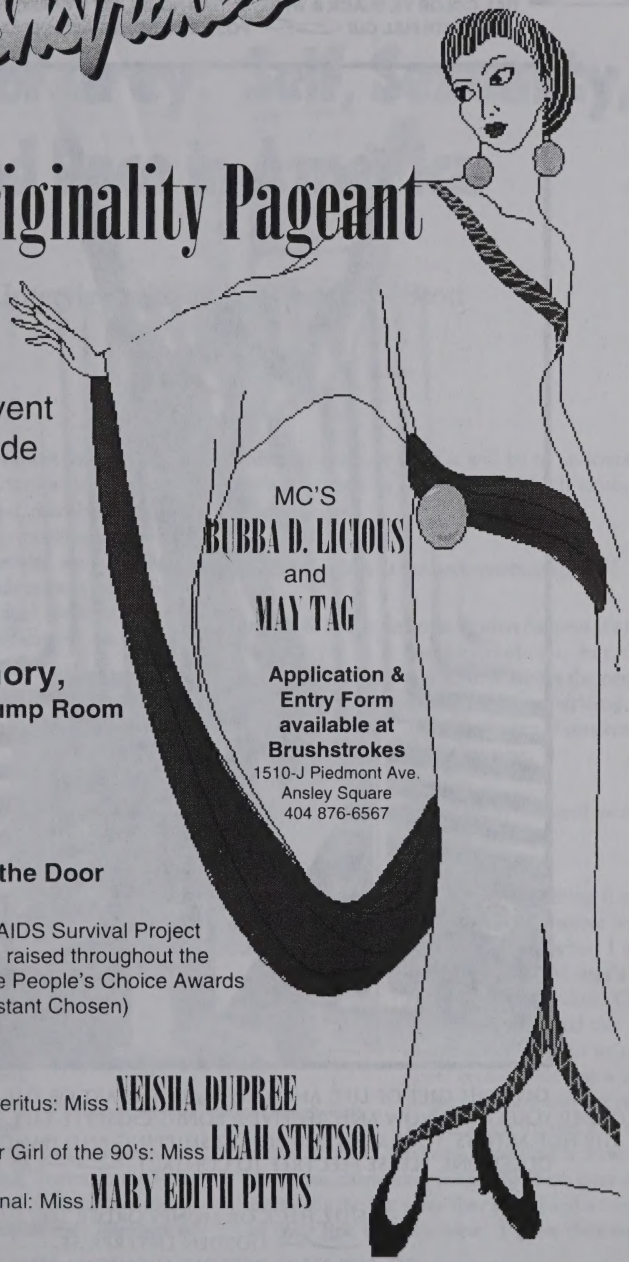
Brushstrokes

Miss Originality Pageant



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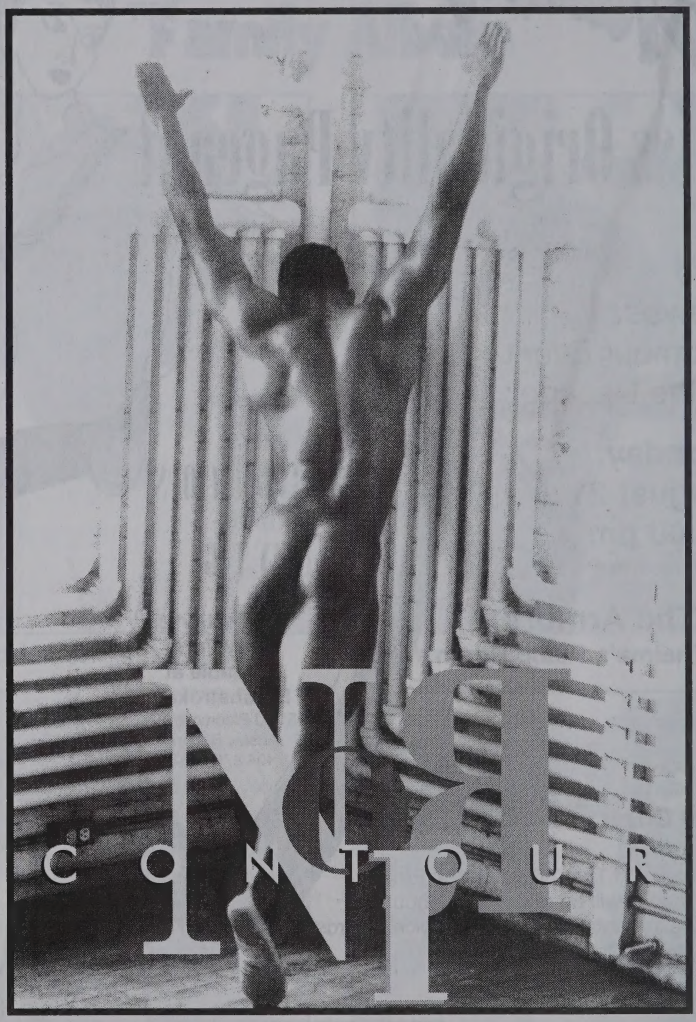

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Shades of Grey: Self, Sexuality, and Race in America

An Interview with author Darieck S. Scott

by Douglas E. Jones

Traitor to the Race cannot be dismissed as another black-boy-loves-white-boy story. Such a reflection is too pat, ridiculously easy and far from the truth in these troubling times where people, black, white, or otherwise, are searching for simple answers to the difficult questions of communal responsibility, individual freedom and the meaning of a worthwhile, substantive life. In this, his first novel, Darieck S. Scott takes the reader on an introspective trip that has more to do with questions of self-identity and courage than the problematic dynamics of race in America. There is a collision of realities here which demonstrate the polemics the main character, an African-American brother named Kenneth, must juggle while existing within the multiple traumas of a homophobic and racist America and a homophobic and ignorant African America. This is important reading, valuable stuff and Darieck has beautifully captured the tension of a Black man at the crossroads of various points in his life. But, Traitor to the Race also reaches beyond itself and demands the reader remember what it was to learn of one's blackness in white America...or what it will be to understand one's whiteness in the diversity which exists in America today.

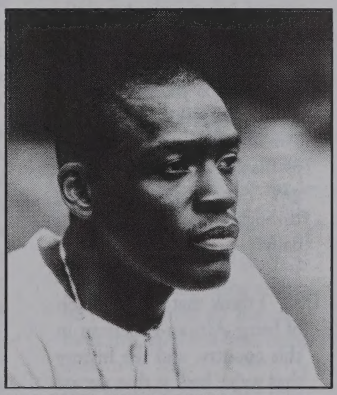

PHOTO BY: JULIAN OKWU

"Traitor to the Race" author Darieck Scott.

Venus Magazine: Is the book autobiographical?

Darieck S. Scott: In terms of what happens it's not autobiographical, but the themes of it are for the period in which I was writing it. They were issues of concern to me at that time.

VM: What inspired you to write the book?

DSS: I started writing it as a short story in a creative writing class at Yale when I was working on my Master's in Afro-American studies. One of the instructors said that we should actually try to write a novel because that was a way to get out there and get published; short stories are not seen that often. You know, I was kind of drawn to these two characters because the short story was essentially the first game they played and a couple of their first conversations. I guess they were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

working through some issues that I needed to work through. That kind of led me on. Also the form worked for me at that time—writing in small vignettes that are laced together. I just worked on it. I started in the summer of 1990—I was supposed to start working at a law firm, but I quit the day before and started building the novel from the short story.

VM: Those vignettes, I guess the styles and forms that you play with, your use of them—specifically the fantasy and the eroticism—are those meant to heighten the reader's awareness of Kenneth's struggles and his attempts to reconcile himself to himself?

DSS: Yes, they are and that happened in a way that I was not entirely clear about when I was writing it. In retrospect, it looks to me that the fragmentary style is a way of charting Kenneth's relationship to his own identity and how complicated that is. Also, it represents how multifaceted, how multivalent that relationship is. I think what the novel was trying to do is to track the way in which a Black gay identity—this particular Black gay identity—would have to exist and have lots of different relationships to the rest of the world, so that Kenneth is looking out at other people, fantasizing about them, pulling aspects back into himself, projecting his own stuff onto other people and in the process of doing that—working in his unconscious—developing who he is and bringing that to consciousness, which I hope he begins to do by the end of the novel. So, it represents the complicated process of the relationship between fantasy and politics and who you are in terms of sex, sexuality, eroticism, and desire. I am trying to put all those things in play with that structure and what's going on in those particular structures.

VM: Ummmm. Collision of several different questions, I'll try to separate them: First, 'inhabitation,' the living through of other people's experiences—I guess a process of becoming something else, experiencing something else through someone else and structuring that Black gay identity. Do you feel that we, as Black folks in a white America—to stretch further, as Black gay folks in a white gay America—are living through those inhabitations daily?

DSS: I think that the condition of being African-American in this country, and the history that we've had, is that we are both integral to and a part of this culture, the whiter culture—whatever you call American culture, whatever that composite is—as well as never feeling quite at home in it and being outside of it. So you get to the case of a Black gay person, someone who is conscious of themselves as such, that you are both within the African-American culture and the African-American community, but because of all the silence around the presence of gay men and lesbians in the African-American community and the way in which we're not really included in representations of ourselves as African-Americans, we are both fully part of that and outside of that as well. It's a fragmented perspective given what we're told; it has to become something which is unified and united and coherent and whole for each of us by what we do with it. We have to come into the consciousness of being able to stand in all those different places and bring them all together. Inhabitation, in a broader sense, would involve looking at all those particular pieces that you get thrown at you from the culture about what is to be Black or what it is to be a Black male or what it is to be Black, male, and gay or what it is to be gay or whatever and how those things get separated—that's sort of what Kenneth is doing. He's taking pieces that are given to him and then transforming them into something which makes sense to him. I think that is the central theme of the novel: something about being able to resist whatever labels you get, but at the same time knowing that you're taking part in some of them because you live in the

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culture and you can't separate yourself from it altogether. You have to find your own place within all of that.

VM: We come to see Kenneth through a slow process of evolution—watching his frustration and growth through his experiences and fantasies. Does the inhabitation underscore the overall taboo—in terms of societal and communal definitions—of being Black and gay, of being Black and gay and involved with a white man?

DSS: Yes, I think it does go along with that very well and I think the title of the novel—the idea of being a traitor to the race—comments on that as well. For Kenneth that is the central theme, the label that he has to resist. He has to find some way to insist that he still belongs in the community. Yes, those things are being worked together. I think the idea of being in an inter-racial relationship, which is probably the easiest way to look at the novel and say that's what it's about, is the catalyst for him to have something to struggle with that's tangible. However, ultimately the novel is about Kenneth finding a way to resist all the labels which I was talking about and complying with them and finding where he is in the midst of them.

VM: The Black community dealing with its issues of homophobia....are we struggling to survive as a community and can we not "afford" to prioritize our existence in terms of the civil rights issues versus the rights of Black gays and lesbians or can we do it at the same time?

DSS: Is it that question, 'Are you African-American first or are you gay first'?

VM: Yeah, that question.

DSS: That question. Ummm...First, I don't see an inherent contradiction between the idea that we are in a struggle for our existence in this country and the fact that insisting that your being gay or lesbian or whatever means that you shouldn't be fully included in the community and think that the issues which keep you from being fully included shouldn't be addressed. I think that those things kind of go together because, ultimately, what Black liberation is about is about being able to be fully human and fully a part of whatever community you happen to be in and being able to be released from all the strictures that keep you from being able to do that and certainly one of those strictures both within the African-American culture and the whiter culture has to do with sexuality—and not just for gays and lesbians, but for heterosexuals, for women, for whatever. I guess the very idea that you should postpone some aspect of the struggle, the idea that you're supposed to put something on hold so that the other thing can get done, I don't think that works. I think as a practical matter it just doesn't work.. You don't really have a community if what you're doing is faking it, pretending that some vital part of it—and Black gays and lesbians have been a vital part of the community—doesn't exist. You're not effecting community, you're not building one, you're just imposing your particular view of what you want on the rest of the community and if people are falling in line with it, that's what they're doing, but it's not really true. You will be sowing the seeds of your own destruction because you can't really face up to what's going on. It's almost like that's a sort of axiom of politics and culture in the world: You can't continually repress things, you can't continually push them off and pretend they're not there because they always, always come back. The longer you repress them the more violent they are when they return....and the more destructive.

VM: And we've finally gotten to the boiling point.

DSS: Well, there's a contemporary moment we've been living in since at least the mid-80's where we, all of us Black gay and lesbian people who are conscious of ourselves as being that, are making ourselves

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known more. There's a lot more to be done there. As far as reaching the boiling point maybe this is it, but there may be worse to come yet because I still don't see that the issues are being taken up as much as they ought to be. We need to be concerned how we, as African-Americans, are treating each other around these issues of sexuality. There's a great deal of resistance in broaching the issue and there's been a long contemporary history, at least since the 1960s and the Black Power Movement, of saying that, 'Oh, it's just a white man's disease,' etc. All that kind of stuff really has to be addressed and really has to be deeply reformulated. That is what I would consider one of the most pressing issues for us to deal with. I don't know how we do it, but when I say the worse is yet to come, I think the worst is coming around that issue of struggling to get everybody else to say, 'OK, you're a part of us.' We're going to have to deal with our homophobia and that's very difficult. Very difficult.

VM: And it's very clear in the book that that's Kenneth's ultimate struggle: Him coming to his own identity as a Black gay man and then dealing with other Black gay men.

DSS: Yeah. Yeah. And then the larger issue stemming from that is dealing with other Black men period. The first part of that is him dealing with other Black gay men, then the next part is him dealing with Black men in general, then the construct of Black masculinity and the Black community, and he moves on from there. And all of that certainly doesn't happen in the book, but what does get done in the novel is the first part of that begins to open up for him. It's a long process that we all have to deal with because we live in a society where we're so systematically degraded it makes it very difficult for really loving and respectful relationships to occur easily between us: Between Black men and Black women, between Black gay men and each other, and so on. There's a lot of work to be done.

VM: What are you commenting on about the state of Black-white relations in America?

DSS: (laughs) I don't know that I'm really commenting that much on it. I think the state of it in general is pretty bad, but I don't know how much of it I deal with in the novel. I certainly have Evan (Kenneth's lover) in the position where he's having to deal with some of these issues. But what I like about what I did with him is that his consideration of these issues with Kenneth, with Kenneth's relationship to his (Kenneth's) cousin's death, and Kenneth's relationship to him (Evan), makes him consider his own role playing in society as a white man, as a white man who has particular kind of looks—soap opera kind of looks—and having him confront that stuff and confront what it is to be white. I think that's clearly an issue that has to be addressed because one of the biggest impediments to white people understanding racism is that they generally don't have to think of themselves as being white, unless there's some race issue that's suddenly thrown at them and then they bond together against Black people or whatever it is that they do. Whiteness, therefore, depends on some definition of blackness and he (Evan) kind of begins to investigate that. I do think that that's a necessary thing for white people to do. Again, that's another thing that's not easy for them to do and in some ways it is counter-intuitive because in some ways their power depends upon partly pretending that they're just human and largely unaware [of this race issue in America].

VM: And it's an issue that they usually don't have to face until they're well into adulthood, whereas we usually have to face it very young in childhood.

DSS: Right. Much earlier, much earlier.

VM: Did this story evolve of itself?

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DSS: You mean independent of my life?

VM: Yeah.

DSS: No, it had similarities to my life. I think that the reason for this story at the time that I wrote it, is that I was just coming out around that same period, which to me meant having to relieve some of the constraints on my own expression that I had really adhered to for a very long time—some of the rules of convention of what it meant to be whatever it was that I was supposed to be—and then some time after I came out I fell in love with someone who was white and I had that whole issue to deal with because I certainly never expected that to happen. I did not envision it, it was certainly not my fantasy of what my life would be like. And, you know, I kind of realized that was not the central issue, that there were a lot of other issues involved in it and I guess that it was a matter of instinct to follow this particular story because I had other stories I could have used in a novel and some of those may come to the fore later. But at that time this was something that I needed to do because it was all about what was happening for me at the same time. I needed to figure out who I was in relationship to what kind of labels were out there for me, what kind of visions were out there. Writing the story for me was part of that process, therefore it was very vital. Funny, now I look back on it and I say, 'Oh, I'm really over that issue'.

VM: So, although it's not autobiographical, per se, it very much involves alot of your thought at that time.

DSS: Yeah or alot of my process of whatever process that was I was going through that was subconscious. There are things that are said through various characters which are things that I might say or pieces of myself speaking to each other, but alot of it is really subconscious. For this writing experience, whatever was driving me to express something got filtered through this whole story that I was trying to make up. It's like your own private mythology: The story has symbols and things in it which have to do with something outside of the story.

VM: We spoke about this before: In terms of language and style, it's beautifully crafted, beautifully written. Was it difficult to write?

DSS: No. No, it wasn't. It wasn't difficult in the sense that I didn't sweat out every word and that kind of thing....

VM: Well, I mean how did you come up with the forms? There were some parts where you used reverse parenthesis and then there was a play...?

DSS: (laughs) You know I really don't know where that came from exactly. Like I said in the beginning, I think it had relationship to the theme of how you build self in a context where you are standing amongst different places. But, I'm not really sure where that came from except maybe from the kind of stories that I was reading—I've always been interested in narratives that are kind of complicated and dense and where there are lots of things put together. I think I really wanted to play with all that stuff and for some reason this particular novel came to me in scenes.

VM: Well, wonderfully crafted. You make reference to the very great and phenomenal Toni Morrison, one of the people you admire most?

DSS: Yeah, definitely. She's probably the person I admire most, not that I think there's much relationship between her writing and mine. But I admire her work because I think it's amazingly beautiful, but also because I think it's so full of wisdom. She's definitely my favorite—I know I've read all of her books more than once.

VM: Recently we've heard of the struggles of E. Lynn Harris and James Earl Hardy in bringing their works to the market place. Did you have similar experiences?

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DSS: I don't actually know about James Earl Hardy's experiences, but I do know about E. Lynn Harris' because I read about them before and I actually got to meet him. My experience wasn't similar to his because he self-published first and did alot of self-promotion because he was running into difficulty getting published. My situation was different—although I don't know how typical or atypical it was because I don't know any other writers—I just wrote the thing and started sending it around to agents and was rejected several times. That was very difficult because I remember thinking, 'I'm not the self-publishing type nor the self-promoting type, so I'm going to be in pretty bad shape if I can't get an agent because I don't even know this industry well.' But, I kept looking for one and just persevered through that [rejection] because I knew that was what happened and that rejection was a part of the whole process. I just kept looking, eventually I heard that Terry MacMillan was teaching a creative writing course at Stanford, so I tried to get in it and she told me my work was too advanced for the class but to come see her. So, I went to see her and I told her that I was in this quandary: I have this manuscript that I would like to get published but I don't have an agent. She gave me the name of a couple of agents, including her own agent. I was not successful with those agents either, however Terry MacMillan's agent liked the novel alot and although she rejected it, she recommended me to another agent who eventually signed me. Within thirty days the manuscript was circulated to twenty publishers and Dutton eventually bought it. I think alot of the initial resistance has to do with publishers not quite understanding what is going on in the Black gay world. For whatever reason, publishers have not recognized the opportunities from the successes of James Earl Hardy and E. Lynn Harris, that there's a market out there interested in this subject—they haven't quite gotten a handle on that.

VM: Right. And I guess that oversight will be an opportunity for us to start capitalizing on our own stuff and start making our own dollars and setting up those types of things that we need in our community.

DSS: Yeah, I think that's true. And I think you may see—although this is not a prediction—a repeat of what happened in the seventies and early eighties with black heterosexual women: They were having the same struggles with bringing themselves to voice and getting publishers to pay attention to them, to take them seriously, to recognize that there was a reading public out there that wanted these books. They were hugely successful—at least a few of them—and their names got catapulted out there in the limelight and from there they helped open doors for others. I think—my hope is—that something similar will be happening with black gay and lesbian writing.

VM: Definitely. Definitely. Definitely. And you're one of the ones helping to open those doors. Let me say thank you, thank you, thank you on behalf of Venus Magazine and our readership for the interview and for your example. I enjoyed speaking with you.

DSS: Thank you, it was a good interview; I enjoyed doing it.

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Seventh Annual Gay and Lesbian Business Expo

By Twyla Walling

There's strength in numbers. That's why there's a Black Gay Pride. That's why there's an AIDS Quilt. And that's why there's Business Expo '95 at the Georgia World Congress Center on October 7 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

"We started out seven years ago to show the gay and lesbian community's economic power and depth," said Expo Chair Jerrilyn Levetan. "Since then, the event has grown every year to include more regional and national companies, and it gets better every year."

The Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo '95 will include over 150 booths of gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses this year, according to Levetan. "Everybody from florists to mechanics will be there," she said, "including national companies like NationsBank and regional favorites like the Atlanta Business Chronicle."

Presented by the Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC), better known by it's acronym "Gay Buck," Expo '95 is heating up faster than ever. The hottest ticket, according to sales agent Theresa Lowery, seems to be the Retail Marketplace.

"It's an obvious growth step for us," she said, "and it further cements the idea that the gay dollar has power and it should be used whenever possible ."

Attendees will not only have a chance to spend some money this year, there's a serious chance to win valuable prizes. "We're going to give away over $10,000 dollars worth of door prizes," said Levetan. "All of our exhibitors are chipping in this year."

In addition to the appearance of black owned business exhibitors, Venus Magazine is a proud sponsor this year.

"Coalition building is what we're all about," said publisher Charlene Cothran. "Both from a people of color standpoint and a gay/lesbian position, Expo gives us a chance to meet thousands of people we might never run across in the normal course of affairs."

As testament to that, Cothran points out that she has recently named Shadow Grafix, Inc., another Expo sponsor, as the designer for Venus Magazine.

"I feel great about our relationship (with Shadow Grafix)," Cothran said. "And this deal is a direct result of Expo—and we haven't even set-up our booth yet!"

"The participation of African-American businesses is crucial to the continued strength of this event," concurred GABC president Patrick Murphy. "Especially here in Atlanta, we can hardly call ourselves a community-wide event without participation from all segments of our community.

"The Expo is all about connecting businesses with the gay and lesbian consumer," he continued. "The power of African-American gay and lesbian consumers is integral to the strength of our community."

The explosive growth of gay-owned and gay-friendly business has strengthened the push for civil rights by bringing issues like domestic partners and insurance coverage into the mainstream of American life. Expo '95 is your chance to show those businesses you appreciate their efforts and reinforce the economic strength of our community.

If you are interested in adding your business to the list of exhibitors, please contact GABC at (404) 377-4258, or, you can register on-line at http://gaypride.com/gabc. However you choose to get involved, act fast. "We will sell out, this year faster than ever," according to Levetan.

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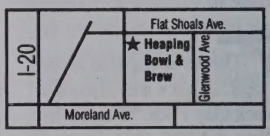

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Visions of Gay Spirit

AN EVENING WITH

Mark Thompson
Author of *Gay Spirit, Leatherfolk,* and the current *Gay Soul.* Culminated 30 years of work for *The Advocate* as writer, photographer and senior editor with *Long Road To Freedom.*

Malcolm Boyd
An Episcopal priest with four decades of activism. Author of *Are You Running With Me Jesus* and an advice column in *Modern Maturity.* At 72 he brings a life rich with years.

David Sereda
Canadian singer/songwriter who has perfromed at the Gay Games in New York and Gay Pride in Toronto. Recently released album *the blue guide.*

Andrew Ramer
Storyteller, writer, artist and chronologer of Gay pre-history. Author of *Two Flutes Playing* and *Angel Answers,* and co-author of *Ask Your Angels*

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This evening is open to anyone interested in Gay men's culture. It introduces the Gay Spirit Visions Conference to be held in North Carolina, September 21–24. The conference, now in its sixth year, is a gathering of Gay men consciously celebrating and creating our spirituality. For more information or to register, call 292-8567.

Real Lesbians Don't Do Men

Inspired by JoJo

I'm gay".

"But does your man know?"

In the past year I have met more lesbians with a man. Yet, when they enter the clubs, their man becomes invisible.

"Who's that?" I question one women after she brought me home.

"Oh, he's my man," she defended.

"Excuse me, while I pick my weave up from the floor!"

This game seemed oh so familiar. It reminded me of the times when I courted men; they too left out the facts: married with children. Were women now playing the same games with their pussies by failing to mention the invisible family at home?

Girlfriend then tried to convince me that she didn't sleep with her man. "Where does he sleep, in the closet?" I inquired to myself, since I only saw two bedrooms, one of which was occupied by her sons.

"I'm leaving him as soon as my boys grow up," she told me. I looked at her with a raised eyebrow, since her children were in preschool. "Why do you call yourself gay when you are actually bisexual?"

"I am anything but bisexual," she professed. "I love women," she tried to sound convincing, explaining that her man only provided the necessities of home. He paid the rent, her car note, along with the rest of her bills. But he couldn't provide her with the one thing she really needed, which was the fervor of a woman.

"What are you doing on the floor? she asked.

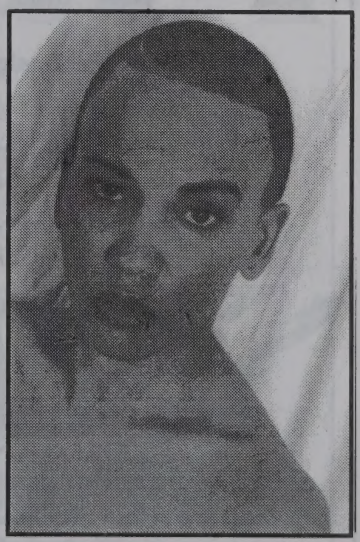
"Girl, I'm searching for my weave, so I can get the hell out of here?" I squealed.

As I drove myself home, I marveled over this woman being a "real lesbian". Why had she chosen to remain undercover, hiding in the closet of life? Was it to protect her family, lifestyle, or career? Did she have the best of both worlds? How much did her man actually know about her dangerous liaisons with women? I was clueless.

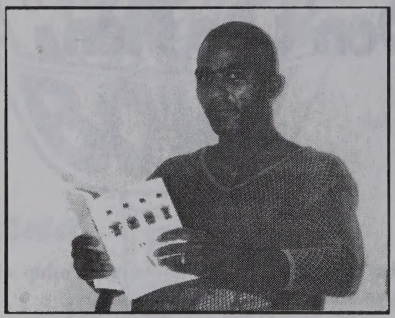
"Real lesbians don't do men" kept swirling in my head. I was now beginning to question the true meaning of being gay. I thought you were bisexual if you could have a relationship with both men and women.

A lesbian with a man... now, that's gonna take some getting used to. When women meet, the common question that is often asked is, "Do you have a lover?" Should we now inquire if there is an invisible man hidden at home?

As I drove the car into the driveway, I now know what my mama meant when she said, "You can't judge a book by its cover." Just 'cause it reads lesbian, don't mean it's all about women!



Outwrite Welcomes Atlanta Black Gay Pride 1995



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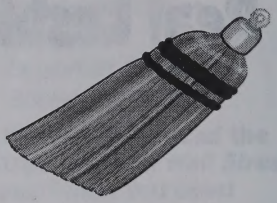

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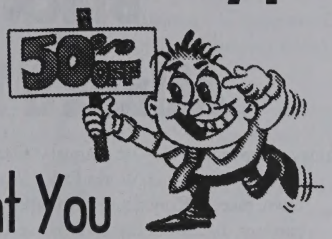

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Contact Information:

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E-Mail:	info@gabc.gaypride.com
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The Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo is Presented by the Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC), a non-profit organization dedicated to the development and growth of businesses that support the lesbian and gay community.

Southeastern Lesbian and Gay Business Expo '95

Georgia World Congress Center • Atlanta, GA • Saturday, October 7, 1995 • 10 a.m. —4 p.m.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1995 Schedule

Friday, September 1 —1st Annual African-American AIDS Memorial and Candlelight Vigil. 7pm - 10pm, Free. Water Works Park. Enjoy live gospel music and community speakers. From downtown, take 75/85 north to 14th Street Exit, turn left, go to Northside Drive, make a right, go under passway, then left at Bishop Street and right on Resevoir Drive into WaterWorks Park!! 10 minutes!

Saturday, September 2—Soul to Soul Brunch, 10:30am - 2:30pm, $3.00 donation, excellent menu items. Mix and mingle, enjoy live jazz with Barry Bruce & Co. and an open mic poetry slam. Kalo's Coffee House, 1248 Clairmont Rd., Decatur.

Saturday, September 2—The Official Black Gay Pride Party kicks off at the Radisson Hotel, downtown at Courtland and International Blvd. Professional models work our runway during a New York House Music Dance. $7.00. Doors open at 10:30pm. Co-sponsored by Venus, M-Press Modeling Agency and Physikos at Ansley.

Saturday, September 2—ACT UP/Atlanta sponsors a "Georgia Ride for a Cure" from Atlanta to Savannah (end date: Sept. 7, 1995) benefitting AIDS Education Services for Minorities, AIDS Legal Project, AIDS Support, Atlanta Lesbian AIDS Project, Brothers Back to Back, Our Common Welfare, Prevention Point, Project Azuka, Inc., Sisterlove, Inc. and WISE.. Contact ACT UP/Atlanta at 404/874-6782. Pledges, Volunteers and Materials are needed.

Sunday, September 3—Prism presents Buckhead Beach Party '3', 5pm - 1am, Buckhead Towne Club. 2900 Pharr Dr. $10. Swimsuit Contest, Hourly Raffle. Call 344-6865 for details.

Sunday, September 3—Safe, Sexy, and Proud Skating Party. 11pm - 3am. Golden Glide 2750 Wesley Chapel Rd. $8 includes skate rental. Sponsored by the Men of Second Sunday benefiting African American Gay Outreach/AID Atlanta. Sisters Welcome!

Monday September 4—Hotlanta's First Close-Out Male & Female Picnic in Chastain Park (Master Grill Lot) 10 AM until Sunset. Starter Food & Beverages are Available at the Main Table. Volleball, Softball, Horse Shoes and Tennis Courts will be provided. Bring your Blankets, Lawn Chairs and Music! Presented by Shadow Production Co.

Monday September 4—First Annual Monday Madness Affair at Revolution. 293 Pharr Road, Buckhead. Doors open at 10 PM. Over $500 in Cash and Prizes, 10,000 Square Feet with Live Entertainment and Two Dynamic DJ's. Advance Tickets: $8, Door Tickets: $10. A portion of proceeds will benefir African American AIDS Organization.

Clip and Save Pocket Schedule

Atlanta.

Wednesday, August 30 and Thursday, August 31—AESM present's their First NiteClub Outreach/Donation Blitz! Help raise AIDS awareness in Atlanta's Gay and Lesbian Community while campaigning for AESM. Volunteers meet at the Otherside on Wednesday from 11 PM to 1 AM and the Pearl Garden on Thursday from 9:30 PM until midnight. Call Mark at 404/753-2900 for more details.

Thursday, August 31—MY SOUL IS A WITNESS—Dr. Gloria Wade-Gayles returns to read from her anthology MY SOUL IS A WITNESS: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY. She offers for the first time a beautiful glimpse into the Spirit that is at the heart of African American women's lives. Gloria's earlier boo, PUSHED BACK TO STRENGTH: A BLACK WOMAN'S JOURNEY HOME received national acclaim for its honest, moving portrayal of the author's spiritual journey. We are pleased, as always, to honor Gloria Wade-Gayles and her work.

Thursday, September 7—A Lady and A Woman opens at Emory University's Canon Chapel. 8:00 PM. $5, free to all students with I.D. Call 727-0270 for group reservations. Take N. Decatur Rd. to Oxford, into Emory Campus. The second major building is White Hall. Cannon Chapel is behind White Hall and has a cross on top of the building. Shows conintue Saturday the ninth at 8 PM and Sunday the tenth at 2:30 PM. The Closing Reception is at 4 PM in the Candler Library, Rm 201-B; sponsored by the Emory University Dept of African American Studies.

Saturday, September 9—Youth conference on sexual orientation: a one-day conference bringing together sexually diverse young folks, our friends, families, mentors, and peers to share our life experiences and to talk about challenges fac ing Atlanta's youth as well as discuss survival skills, support available, and what is needed to foster healthy living. Please join us. For more info, call Steve or Wendi at (404) 908-5368.

Boston.

Saturday, September 9—Third Annual Love Overboard Boat Cruise III aboard the largest twin-hulled catamaran in the New England area, the M/V Freedom. Sponsored by MOCAA. Live entertainment and a Caribbean buffet with a cash bar. Donartions are $10.00 per person. For info, call (617) 267-7766, ext. 572.

New York.

Saturday, September 2 - "Women of the '90's" presents "Our Family Reunion" (Bonnie and Clyde Reunion). Contact Bess Knowing (718) 992-9073 for more info.

Saturday, September 9 - X-Cenrics presents "an End of Summer Jam" at the South Oxford Club located at 187 South Oxford St. in Brooklyn from 11pm - 5am, tickets $30.00 in advance open bar. Featuring special guest appearances. Music by GHP. For more information & tickets contact: MD Murphy (917) 278-1649, Jackie Brantley (914) 972-3205, or Bess (718) 992-9073. Tickets go on sale July 1995!

Monday, September 1 - Saturday 16 - NJEMA announces "The Cruise of Distinction 1995!" Tour a total of five fabulous islands!! Free rum swizzles, happy ho;ur, island bar-b-que, live reggae and calypso music for 5 fabulous days aboard a Caribbean Cruise. Join us aboard the yacht "Flying Cloud." For ticket information contact Bess Knowings at (718) 992-9073.

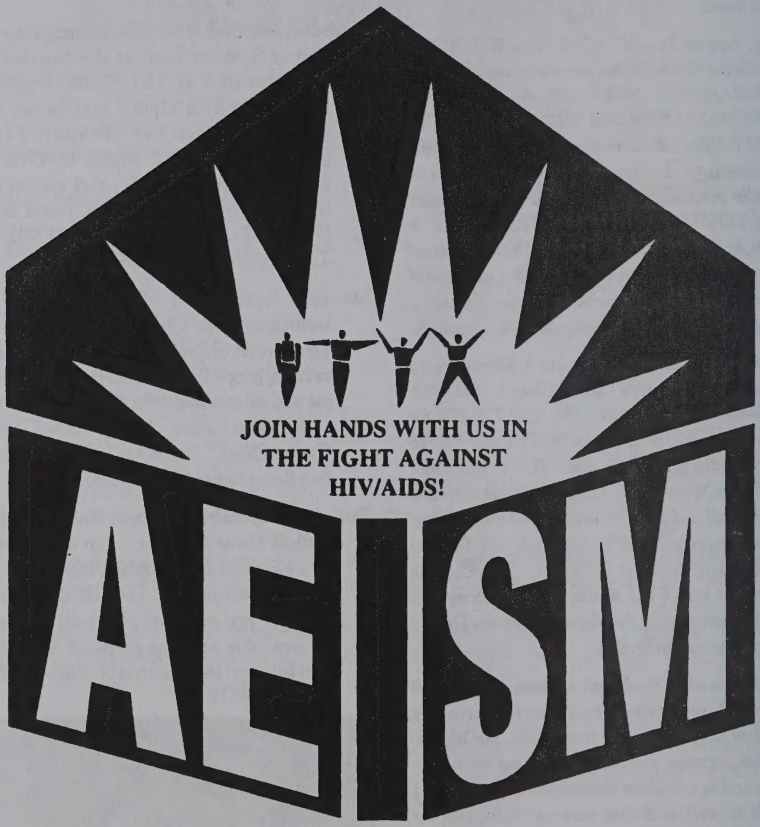
Saturday, September 16 - 4th Annual Oldtimers Softball Game & Picnic. Join us at FDR Park for a fun-filled day of softball, basketball, volleyball, and relaxation!! Dust off those bats and gloves if you want to "play ball!" Free grills are available so come prepared to barbeque! For further info, contact Barbara Rooks (718) 379-4075.

PHOTO BY: CHARLES EASLEY

Venus publisher, Charlene Cothran, and Chicago's Gwen Austin greet guests at a recent Venus fundraiser.

You've Seen Us, We've Seen You...
Now Let's See You Make a Difference!

In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.



Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

"We Love You, Love Yourself... BE SAFE!"

If you would like to volunteer, need information, or would like to make a tax deductible contribution, please contact:

AIDS Education/Services for Minorities
P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, Georgia 30337
PH: 404/753-2900 • FX: 404/752-9610

Karat's Night Club Opening This Fall

Johnnie Culbreath and Michael Holt, Midtown Atlanta residents, plan to open a rhythm and blues nightclub early in October to be located at 511 Peachtree Street, just a few blocks from the heart of downtown.

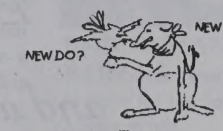
The club, according to the newly declared entrepreneurs, will feature live music several nights a week and will strive to serve a Gay African-American audience that, to date, has been under-served in this city. "Selecting music by popular African-American artists, both oldies and contemporary hits, will further characterize the bar as a comfortable, nostalgic, and diverse establishment," according to the owners.

Both Holt and Culbreath believe Atlanta is ready for an "upscale" club that dedicates itself to an audience of Lesbian and Gay African-Americans. Culbreath, a Gay African-American states, "in my own pursuit for entertainment and certainly in the pursuit of my friends, there is a strong desire for a sophisticated, but fun place to go where you can actually talk over the music level and meet people like yourself."

Holt reiterates that "we want to ensure a diverse patronage, but we are even more committed to establishing Karats as not just a business in the Black Lesbian and Gay community, but a resource as well."

Planning a full-service bar, Culbreath and Holt have arranged to feature a New Orleans talent, Mary Griffin, on vocals and Jack Fowler on key board piano. The two will perform on Saturdays and other live music will be presented on Thursdays and Fridays. Presently, the owners are auditioning for other entertainers whose style fits with the jazz or rhythm and blues flavor of the nightclub. Interested artists may write and send bios, arrangements and other information to: Karats, P.O. Box 55554, Atlanta, Georgia 30308. More information regarding Karats will be featured in the October issue of Venus.

CAT TOO!
BIRD·DOG
Spoken Here!



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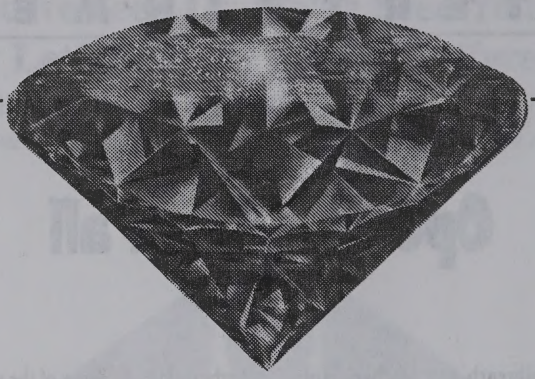


Karats Night Club

Rhythm and Blues

Live Music

and much more . . . !

Coming to 511 Peachtree Street
This October!

Watch for More Details!

Southern Town Hall Meeting

by Charlene Cothran

Phil Wilson, co-founder of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum met with over 30 Atlanta leaders at the Venus office during the first of a series of town hall meetings planned across the country.

Wilson opened by quoting a mentor, "A people not willing to step to the plate will not be taken seriously."

The meeting focused on discussing the need for autonomous Black, Lesbian and Gay organizations. Rev. Herbert Evans visiting from Philadelphia, quickly pointed to the autonomous National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum.

The NBGLLF is based in Los Angeles and is planning it's 9th Annual Conference in Dallas, February 1996. The NGBLLF exist to give technical assistance to other black gay and lesbian organizations, to provide a national voice and has a mailing list of over 10,000.

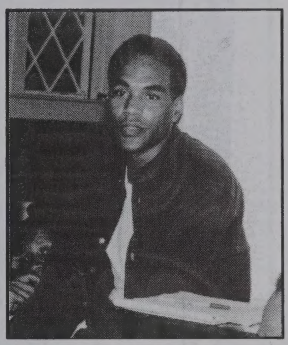


PHOTO BY: JENA P. JONES

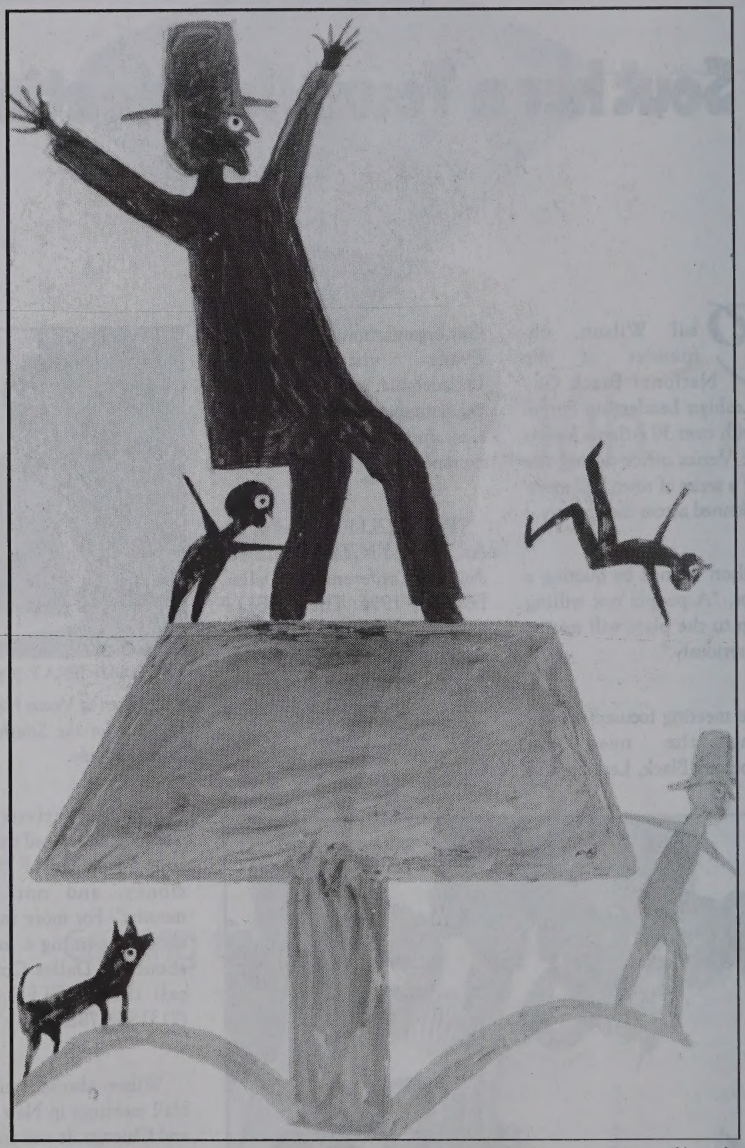
Phil Wilson at Venus Headquarters, in town for the Southern Town Meeting in July.

Atlanta activist Duncan Teague encouraged the group to support NGBLLF "with our money, and not just our mouths". For more information about becoming a member or about the Dallas Conference, call the NBGLLF office at (213) 964-7820.

Wilson also scheduled Town Hall meetings in New York city and Chicago. It was an honor to have our American hero here in Atlanta. Phil, thanks for all you do!

PHOTO BY: JENA P. JONES

Participants at the Southern Town Hall Meeting with Phil Wilson at the Venus Headquarters in July.



HIGH *Explore the accomplishments of two generations of African-American self-taught artists in the exhibition "Dust Tracks on a Road: Four Southern Artists," on view at the High Museum of Art Folk Art and Photography Galleries from August 8 through November 4, 1995. This untitled drawing by Bill Traylor is one of the featured works in this exhibition that brings together four of the most significant self-taught artists from the southern United States. For more information, call (404) 577-6940.*

Michael

Cummings

Carolyn

Mazloomi

Camille Love Galley presents African American Quiltmakers and the National Black Arts Festival's "Our Story" exhibit through September 15 (404)841-0446. 309 E. Paces Ferry Road Buckhead.

Hammonds House Galleries

Hammonds House introduces 75 year old, self taught artist Sandy Hall in "Front and Center" , with an opening reception Sunday Sept. 17 at 2:00pm. The Exhibit runs thru Nov. 19. Hammonds House Galleries is located at 503 Peoples St. SW, (404)752-8730.

"Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South"

"Before Freedom Came" depicts the lifes of everyday African-American men and women in the south before the Civil War. This amazing exhibit runs August 19–October 15 at the Atlanta History Museum.

Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus

Invites you to our 1995-96 Concert Season:

Saturday, December 2, 1995	*Georgia Tech Theater for the Arts*
Saturday, March 16, 1996	*performing with a guest artist, TBA*
Saturday, June 22, 1996	*performing with a guest artist, TBA*

Love to Sing? Rehearsals begin Sept. 10. No audition required.
For more information call AFWC at 438-5823

Robert Glor, Interim Director
Chantel Wright, Assistant Director

The AFWC is supported in part by the Fulton County Commission under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council, the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the General Assembly, and the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Atlanta will hold Revival August 24–27, nightly at 7 PM. The Sunday service will be at 2:30 PM. Other Unity Pastors plan to attend for the installation of Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee, including: Elder Zachary Jones (Unity New York), Rev. Mays (Unity Philadelphia), and members from the movement at large pastored by founder, Bishop Carl Bean. For more information, call (404) 388-4624.

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

Rainey Cheeks, Bishop, Elder Zachary Jones, Rev. Jacqueline Holland.

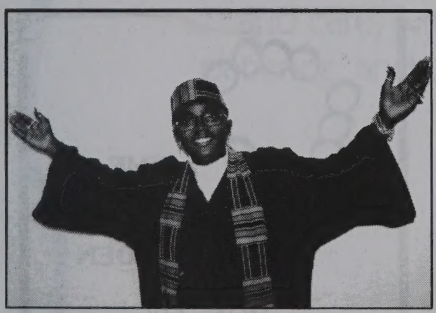

PHOTO BY: KES

Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee will be installed during revival week as Pastor of Atlanta's Unity Fellowship Church.

The Gay and Lesbian African-Americans (G.A.L.A.) would like to thank the Sacramento Community, The Mirage, Lambda Community Center, Andante Marketing and the volunteers for your donations and contributions to a successful Afrocentric Weekend Celebration (July 21-23, 1995). The event's success included a twenty eight meal donations to one of Sacramento's local homeless shelters. Our organization looks forward to seeing you at our next event.

Sunday, September 10, 17, and 24, 4 PM—The Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus welcomes new and returning members to its 1995-96 season. New members may join without an audition by attending rehearsals on these dates at the First Existentialist Congregation, 470 Candler Park Dr. W who would like to be part of AFWC, but do not like to sing, are encouraged to join the AFWC Auxiliary. For more information, please call 438-5823, or write to: AFWC, P.O. Box 8480, Atl, GA 30306

James Earl Hardy, author of the best-seller B-Boy Blues presents his latest work, **SPIKE LEE A Biography** (from Chelsea house). Copies of this exciting examination of one of america's premiere black film makers are available from the author himself! To order yours send a check or money order to: James Earl Hardy, 485 First Avenue, Suite 16E, NY, NY 10016 $22.00 (18.95 per hardback plus postage) or $10.00 (7.95 per paperback plus postage)

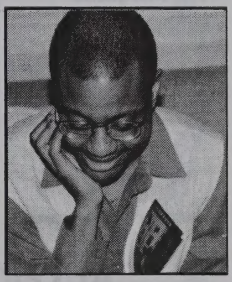

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

James Early Hardy

The Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus is looking for male singing members for all voice parts for their 1995-96 Fifteenth Anniversary Season. For information on auditions and rehearsal please call 698-8138 to schedule audition.

NIGHTLIFE

BARS	LOCATION	BEST NITE	MIX	MUSIC
WAREHOUSE (TRAXX)	306 Luckie St. 404/577-9510	Saturday	Men ..... 80% Women ... 20%	House
Waterworks Cafe	111 Luckie St. 404/577-7059	Sun & Fri.	Men ..... 70% Women ... 30%	R&B, Show House
Pearl Garden	111 Luckie St. 404/524-0036	Thursday	Men ..... 95% Women 5%	R&B, Show
The Marquette Lounge	M.L. King Jr. Dr. 404/526-7677	Saturday	Men ..... 50% Women ... 50%	Top 40, R&B, Show
LORETTA'S	708 Spring St. 404/874-8125	Fri, Sat.	Men ..... 60% Women ... 40%	House

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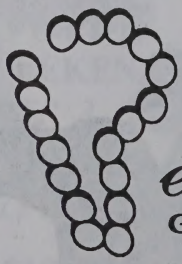

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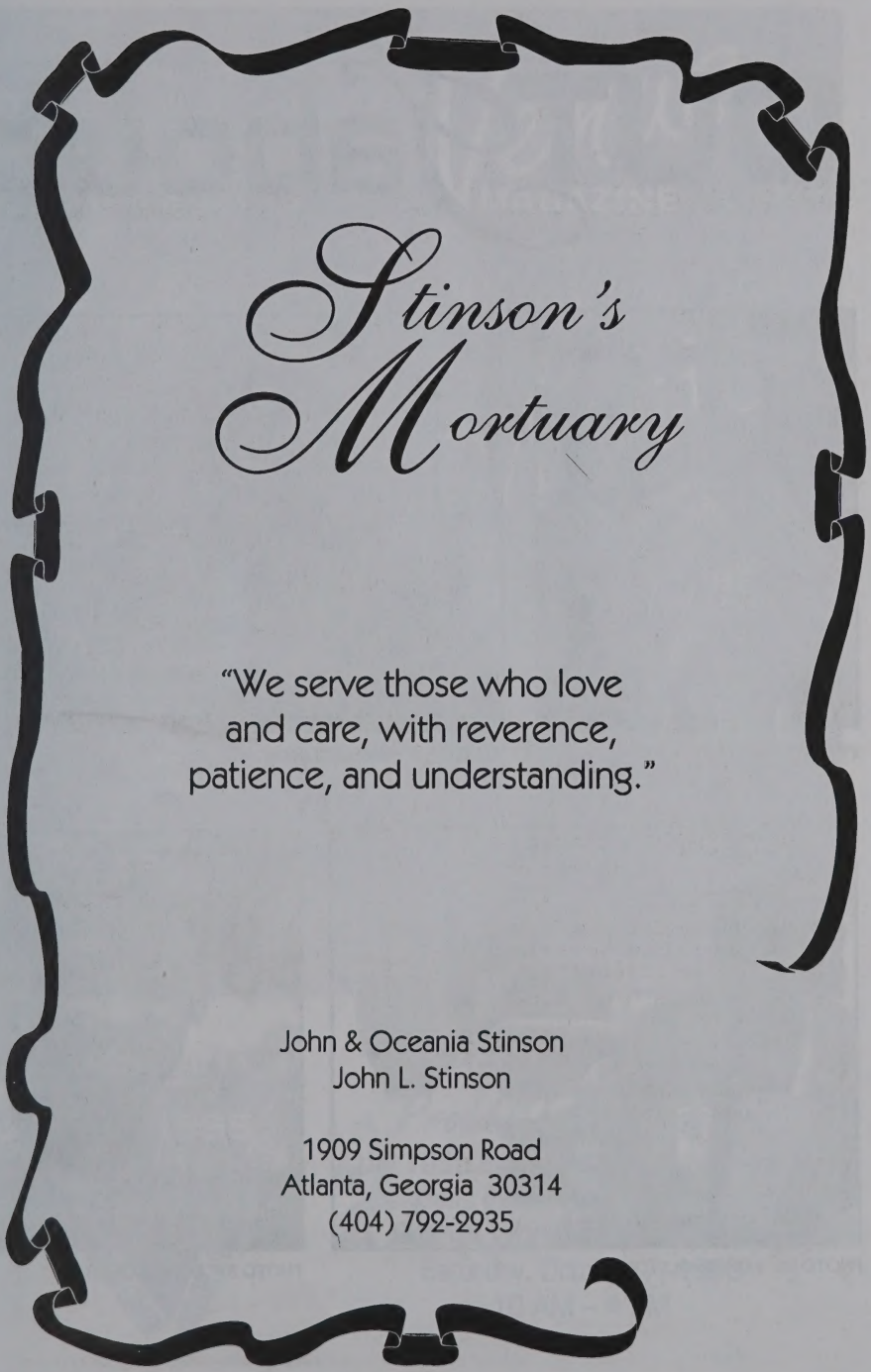
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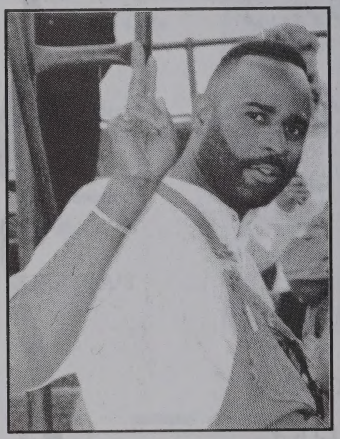

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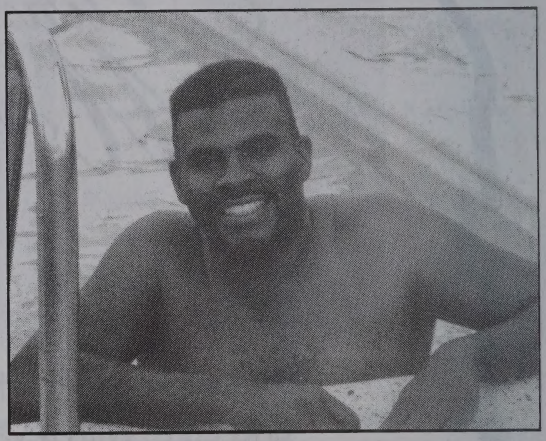

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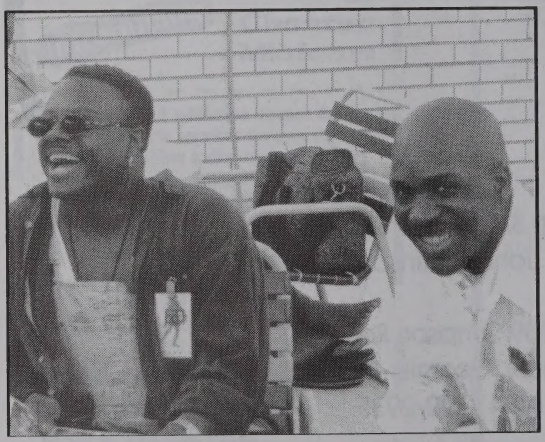

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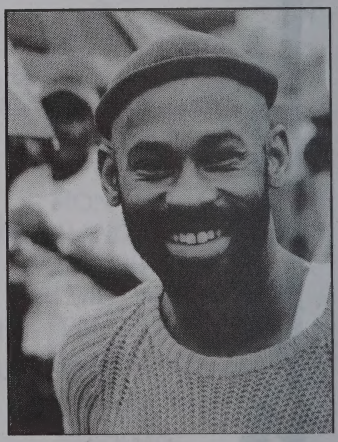

PHOTO BY: RON SINGLETON

SOUTHEASTERN LESBIAN & GAY
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OCT. 7 · GA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER
GREATER ATLANTA BUSINESS COALITION

Venus Magazine is a
Proud Bronze Sponsor
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Saturday, October 7, 1995
10 AM – 4 PM

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians With Children—(404) 498-3815.

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., New York, New York 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atlanta, GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atlanta, GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

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Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

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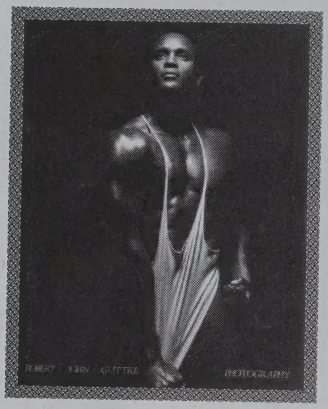

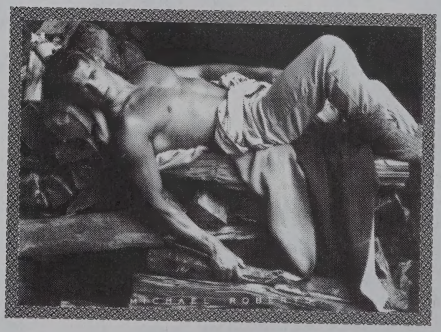

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FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

October 1995
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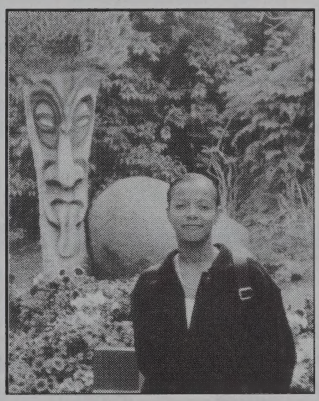
Climbing the wall in China.



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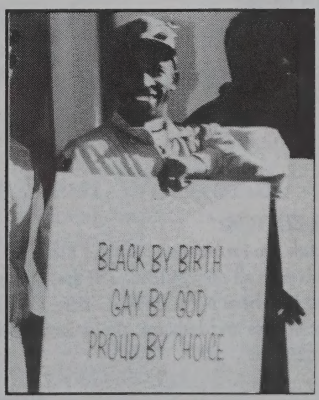


Crashing the Million Man March with our own 10% Club.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

Thanks for creating a voice in Atlanta. I look forward to reading your publication. However, I have one concern. I am a middle-aged person (44) and find it difficult to find articles, books etc. relating to persons in my age group. It would be interesting to read an articles periodically, focusing on older or mature persons. Think about it.

Once again, thank you.

DEAR EDITOR:

Horahee! Just a note to congratulate you on a professional, informative, down-to-earth publication. This is only a beginning!

Charles B. Tarver
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing first to commend you and your staff for printing such a fine and informative publication. "Venus" is definitely a newsworthy magazine, and I pray that it's distribution will be more widespread in the near future.

Linus Lynell
Dallas, TX

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for Venus Magazine! I love it!! I have shared it with all of my friends and they also enjoyed reading it. There is NOTHING here for African-American gays and lesbians. We're looking forward to the next one!

Waletta Scott
Las Vegas, NV

DEAR EDITOR,

You may be surprised to learn exactly how remarkably reknowned Venus Magazine is. Your "Where to Find Us" page doesn't do you justice.

Venus has transcended the orderly world of free society and miraculously been found inside the gay prison society.

You've proved to be an entertaining, intelligent and informative companion. Thank you for reducing the isolation of my imprisonment.

Vernon Beal
Jefferson City, MO

DEAR EDITOR:

I picked up Venus Magazine at the Visitor's Bureau at Underground. A nice lady handed it to me when I inquired about gay and lesbian Atlanta. Keep up the good work. We need you!

Viola
Brooklyn, NY

DEAR EDITOR,

Alright!, Alright, Alright!!!

I happened to stumble across a copy of your magazine at the recently held First Annual Out-Charlotte Festival. Enclosed is my subscription. I look forward to reading the entire magazine. And if there is any way I can help out please feel free to let me know! Great job! It does my heart good and I look forward to hearing from you!!

C. David Wingate
Asheville, NC

P.S.: You have the beginnings of something phenomenal—Hang in there!!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:..... Yvonne "Evee" Smith Adams

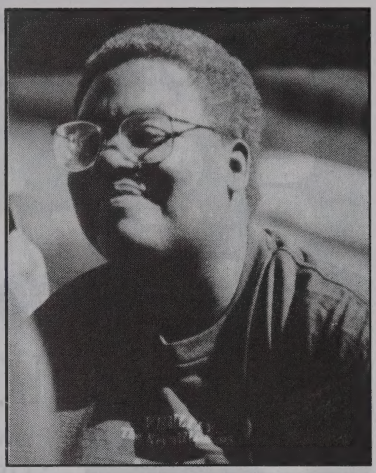
Age:..... 41

Status:..... To Be Arranged

Career: ..... College Advisor/Instructor

Hometown:.. Washington, D.C.

Latest Book:. "Hunter" by Margaret Sloan



As an advisor at Oregan State University, Evee's motto is "I am who I am, I have the right to go wherever I want. I'm responsible for my own joy and happiness in life."

Women At Large

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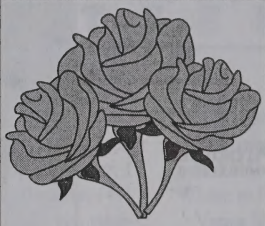

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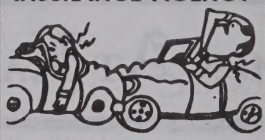

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Traveling to China: A Spiritual Journey

By Wanda Alston

Lately, I have been asked if I considered myself black first or a woman first. Some Black women may say that I am Black first. For me, I am a woman first because of the household I grew up in with eight males and five females. Growing up, my parents have never addressed me as a "black person." A number of references were made to my gender and the limitations that went with being a girl. I felt oppressed as a girl before I ever stepped outside my door into the world of sexism, racism classism, homophobia..

PHOTO COURTESY WANDA ALSTON

At the U.N. Conference on Women's Issues, Wanda Alston (l), Zachie Achmat from South Africa (c), and Valleria Wagner (r), NBGLLF co-chair.

I went to China wondering how I was going to find the niche that would let me know why I was there. I found that niche immediately as a feminist. I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did. I was a U.S.. citizen from North America. This is very different from being a citizen of South America or Central America. I was given a class distinction that I had not experienced in the U.S. As a result, I was faced with some issues that I was not ready to deal with.

The aspect of "class" that I was forced to deal with was not about being poor, middle class or rich. My class distinction was about freedom to express your ideas and thoughts and the opportunity to lift yourself from poverty and physical abuse.

This distinction was particularly clear when I spoke with and observed the women of China. In this communist country, women are treated with less respect than men. They also have very little say so when it comes to education and exchange of ideas and art. These distinctions were also true in many other countries as well.

During the conference, I had an excellent opportunity to network with women from a number of different fields. Patricia Ireland, President of NOW (National Organization for Women), and I co-led a delega-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

tion of thirty NOW members. The group was part of a larger U.S. delegation of 500 women and about 50 Chinese women as part of a U.S.-China Joint Conference on Women's issues in Beijing. Each organization had delegates who were invited to share their professional and organizational experiences. Many of the participants were from the fields of science, technology, medicine, sports and business.

The two day work session was very diverse and covered topics including: violence against women, achieving justice for women, and careers in engineering, etc.

One of the prevailing factors that all the women agreed upon was the fact that a glass ceiling does exist in China as well as the U.S. Women are only able to advance to a certain point on the employment ladder. Beyond that point, males hold the high paying prestigious jobs.

This was discussed in a workshop I attended concerning the women of China. Ninety-five percent of the top management positions in China are held by men with women holding only 5 of those positions. One reason for this is the mandatory retirement of women when they reach the age of 55. The women are then responsible for caring for the elderly.

The first week of my trip was full of cultural site seeing. I was able to visit the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven. These sites were an integral part of understanding the Chinese people and their culture.

We traveled throughout the city in 17 buses and ate our meals at the most exquisite restaurants in Beijing. The people of China had no problem feeding 500 people in one sitting. We would arrive at a restaurant, sit down and begin eating all at the same time. The average Chinese meal is approximately ten courses. Meals included a variety of foods including: vegetables, rice, fish, beef and chicken. The food was delicious. I must say, however, that by the time I returned to the U.S., I was glad not to eat Chinese food for a while.

There were a number of correlations between the Chinese women and the U.S. women. There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "women hold up half the sky." This statement was made during the cultural revolution by Mao. The statement refers to the need for the involvement of women if economic and political change is to take place. Women must be a part of the planning and decision making regarding country and governmental affairs at every level. In addition, if any governmental affairs at every level in addition, if any change is to take place in discrimination and human rights violations of women and children, we must unite with women whose culture and ideas may be like ours and find a common ground to bring about equality, development and peace.

I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did.

The theme of the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Forum was "Equality, Development and Peace." My most memorable moment came at the opening ceremonies of the NGO Forum which took place on August 30, 1995 at the Olympic stadium. The event alone was spectacular. There was a feeling of unity and love from the crowd of 10,000 people from around the world. The people of China did a wonderful job of entertaining the global audience of the many women from 180 countries. They had participants from around China including men, women and children, old and very young.

The passing of the torch was a wonderful part of the opening ceremonies. Women from every country represented at the World Conference on Women passed the torch of equality, development and peace. This served not only to open the ceremony but to symbolize the uniting to discuss all issues of the past decade and into the next millennium. During the passing of the torch, everyone sang "Keep on Moving Forward." This was a very emotional scene which brought many to tears. The ceremony left me with a sense of joy and hope for the world.

The next day, the NGO began outside of Northeast Beijing in Huairou County.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Approximately 30,000 people from 180 countries participated. The first day, it rained and the global tent was filled with women trying to get program books, information and ponchos to help them stay dry. The small group of three women that I traveled with headed to the makeshift McDonald's for lunch. Yes, they did have a McDonald's. Some groups actually protested the presence of the fast food chain.

I wanted to participate in the NGO forum because of the lack of discussion of lesbian issues that had not been brought into the mainstream of the Platform of Action. The Platform included those actions that governments should take to eliminate poverty, violence against women, reproductive rights, health and many other issues. What was not included in the Platform of Action was sexual orientation. Sexuality, as it related to lesbianism and discrimination, was kept to a minimum. Representatives from South Africa were the most outspoken regarding this issue. The country has sexual orientation in their national constitution.

The final most remarkable experience I had going to China was the fact that all my life, I knew that people of color were the largest group in the world. That fact became very clear when I went to the NGO forum. I noticed that the majority of the women looked like me. This gave me some hope as I aspire to empower my sisters in the U.S.

I learned a great deal about myself during my travel to China. I met a woman who saved for five years to attend the conference. She sold straw baskets that she made. Here I thought that working the last few months to secure my way was a feat.

My journey was a spiritual one. It began months, years and decades before I consciously realized that I would be traveling to China. I have always wanted to travel to China. I feel spiritually connected to China, as I do Africa. This journey proved to be the beginning of many trips I will take outside the U.S. I use such journeys to discover and understand my blackness, lesbianism and my feminism. During my travels, I am able to explore want it is like to struggle in a movement where black women are still politically and economically invisible.

Wanda Alston is an activist from the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and N.O.W.

Where do you worship & why?

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Tony Daniels with Unity Founder, Bishop Carl Bean.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church is where I worship. This church is the one place that I've found that welcomes me as I am; a Black Gay Man, activist, writer, performer, living with AIDS. We embrace people from all walks of life, regardless of sexual orientation, race, sex, creed, or gender. The church's motto is "God is Love and Love is for Everyone." We make that clear every Sunday. I am an officer of the church (Deacon in Training), this affords me a lot of contact with the congregation. I know first hand the good we are doing in the name of the Lord God who is in each and everyone of us. The emphasis is placed on spirituality as opposed to the literal interpretation of written scriptures.

Tony Daniels, 1995

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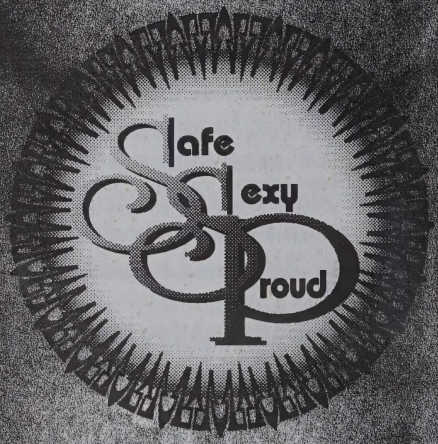

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Project Open Hand: Meals for Life

Project Open Hand is a non-profit organization which provides two freshly prepared meals a day, seven days a week to people who are living with AIDS in Atlanta. There is no charge to the recipients for the meals. Project Open Hand currently delivers to around 500 clients (1000 meals) per day. Approximately fifty new clients are added each month.

Project Open Hand works with a nutritionist to plan appropriate diets for people living with AIDS and HIV-related illnesses. The Project attempts to meet the varied needs of all of its clients by serving, in addition to regular meals, vegetarian, bland, no dairy, no salt, no pork, no red meat, no fish, soft meals, diabetic, and liquid meals.

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of health care for a person with AIDS. The progression of HIV infection can be accelerated or intensified by nutritional deficiencies. It is imperative that people with AIDS have proper nutrition in order to try to maintain a stronger immune system. A large number of these people have neither the strength nor the energy to shop for ingredients or to prepare the meals. Frequently, people are devastated financially by the disease, and they do not have the resources to obtain nutritious food.

Project Open Hand pioneered a system of delivering meals cold, at close to freezing temperatures. Many meal delivery services deliver meals hot, requiring the food to be kept in warmers for long periods. Keeping the food warm can increase the risk of bacterial growth—an extreme hazard for immune-suppressed individuals. The Project serves meals in special packaging so that clients may use microwaves to heat the meals. Project Open Hand provides donated microwaves to clients who cannot obtain their own.

Project Open Hand began in 1988 with only fourteen clients, operating out of the kitchen of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. The Project has now served around two million meals. Project Open Hand relies heavily on volunteers for all aspects of its operation. Volunteers prepare, pack, and deliver meals to clients, work in the office, and assist in fundraisers and other community events.

In 1991, Project Open Hand moved to its current operating site at the old Bass High School in Little Five Points. The Project shares the kitchen there with the staff of Mary Lin Elementary School, which is using the building until renovations are completed on their own building. Project Open Hand is actively negotiating for a new facility for its operations.

Project Open Hand's annual $2.5 million operating expenses are funded through grants, private donations, fundraising events, and corporate giving.

Atlanta is a city which traditionally reaches out to its citizens who are in need and embraces their diversity. Project Open Hand continues to rediscover the "heart" of Atlanta and its people in the outpouring of help from its volunteers and supporters.

Project Open Hand is in need of volunteers in all areas of its operations, day and evening. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities may call (404) 525-4620.

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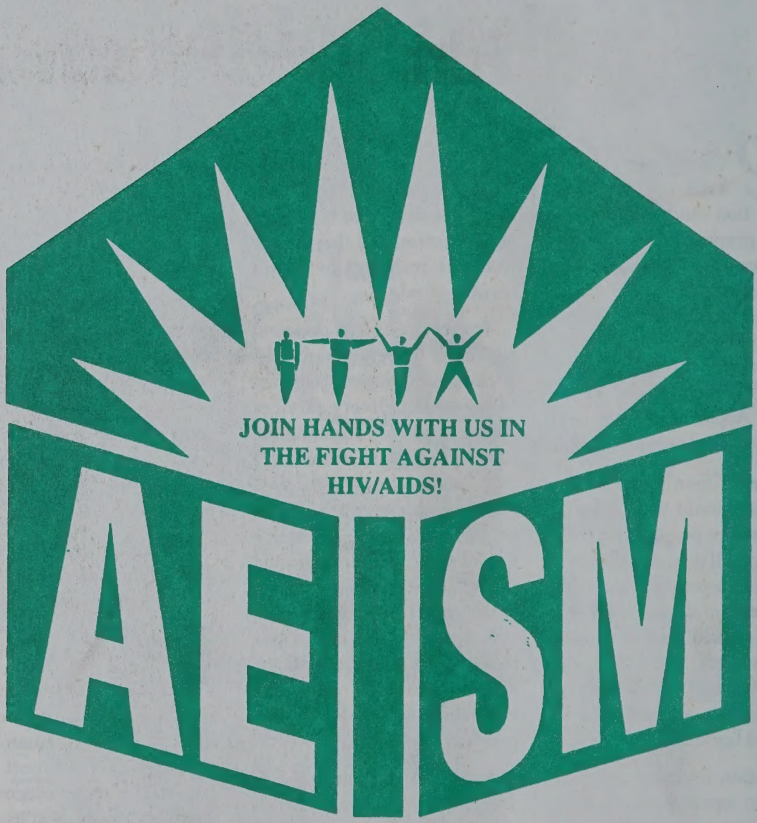

Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

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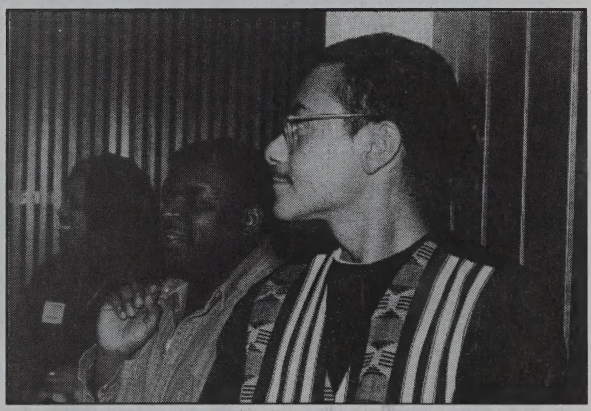
Black Nations/Queer Nations?
MIX 95: Film/Video Festival

MIX 95: Ninth New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival—the largest avant garde film festival in the world and oldest queer festival in New York City—is bringing more than 200 queer experimental films, videos, and cybermedia from around the world to three venues in New York.

The festival will feature the long-awaited feature film debut by Thomas Allen Harris, "Vintage * Families of Value," an experimental documentary about black gay siblings. The Festival will close with the World Premiere of "Black Nations/ Queer Nations?" an experimental documentary directed by Shari Frilot about the historic conference by the same name which addressed lesbian and gay sexualities in the African Diaspora. MIX 95 will also feature "Jungli Boogie," a queer and South Asian groovin' production.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYLE ASTON HARRIS

Isaac Julien and Kabena Mercer at "Black Nations/Queer Nations?"

Other festival highlights include CYBERTOPIA: Mapping Queer Spaces, an installation of interactive media works and queer digital media.

Free Speech TV (Nov. 4-17) four hours of the best of MIX 95 in a cable access program which will be broadcast daily in more than 50 cities across America, and and MIX BRASIL: 3rd Festival das Manifestacoes da Sexualidade, the only traveling lesbian and gay festival in South America. With the support of MTV Brasil, the Banco Nacional in Sao Paulo and the Sao Paulo state.

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Indecent Proposal

A Twist on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

By Rosalind Christine Lloyd

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been a popular topic in the media because it plays almost like a soap opera in that it reeks of scandal and controversy. It is an important topic as current events uniquely chronicles the ever-slowly changing role of women in the workplace. One only has to examine the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings and Senator Packwood case as points of reference to this fact. However, sexual harassment of and in the Gay and Lesbian community is a subject that lies deep in the heart of America's crowded closet. As our ranks become more visible, it was only a matter of time vefore we began to witness an increase in negative sociological issues that plague the heterosexual community beginning to infiltrate the homosexual community. For example, racism and sexism are alive and well in the Gay and Lesbian community, even in these so-called progressive "Gay Nineties."

We have been affected by sexual harassment, by and large, by

Author Rosalind Christine Lloyd

individuals that somehow consider themselves members of the heterosexual community. I know this to be true on a personal note as I have experienced this form of harassment first-hand. My twelve lesbian years did not prepare me for what I encountered and the experience managed to leave a lasting impression with serious scars that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

It was a complex situation crossing the lines of gender, sexual and racial politics all at once. For several years I worked for a prominent and very successful organization where I was "out" on the job. Although I didn't wear my sexual identity on my sleeve, my orientation was a well-known fact among my colleagues and I was accepted as a lesbian without issue.

When a highly qualified, well-connected African-American woman came to head our office as Director, I was empowered to know that the organization had the decency, initiative, and foresight to promote a sister as a Director to the Board of Trustees where women and African Americans were typically rare. It was a progressive step for the administration. Denise was Ivy league educated, came from a near wealthy family, she married into a wealthy, near prestigious family, boasted an impressive background, spoke French like only a dignified French woman could and had the chic-est fashion sense known to woman-kind. This sister was eager for any challenge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Denise and I developed an excellent working relationship as Director and assistant, mentor and protégé, and friends. Our association was driven by pride and mutual respect. To be on her team motivated me—it was my number one objective to ensure that our office produce high quality product and to reinforce the company's commitment to hiring talented African-Americans, Women and Gays and Lesbians into higher positions of authority. I would no longer allow the infamous glass ceiling to influence my desire to elevate. She inspired me to further my education, to reach higher than I thought possible, constantly reminding me of how bright and talented I am. With her support and encouragement, I became an important player in the scheme of things as they pertained to our office. My involvement in critical projects, presentations, and my participation in international conferences will always remain as important experiences I will never forget; Denise made it possible.

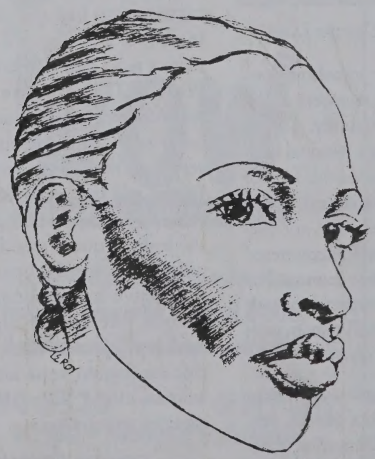
At first, I considered her overt interest in me as mere curiosity, which we all know will happen at times when certain heterosexual women learn that certain women are lesbians. Suddenly the wind shifts, the tides change, things just aren't the same anymore. You either become the receptacle of all her feminine desire or you become the gay representative of information on all things remotely related to Gay and Lesbian issues. This is not the most desirable position to be in.

It started out with the endless compliments and verbal adorations. Expensive dinners at pricey, upscale restaurants were common, where we ate quite well and the company paid for every bit of it. Gifts of foreign chocolates, antique jewelry of questionable value, French perfume, random pieces of designer clothing, unlimited use of her credit card for no apparent reason other that the fact that she was purely being nice to me. All of this resulted into a dangerous, unrequited obsession. An objective observer would initially view our tightness as a mentor-protégé relationship. However, if one were to take a closer look and peel off the layers of ambiguity and professional protocol, one could easily see a smoldering yet subtley restrained innuendo.

The innuendo soon escalated to advances; Denise finding excuses to touch my face, reasons to run her fingers along my hair, giving me unsolicited back rubs while telling me how beautiful she thinks I am. The "come with me to the ladies room," conversations about her husband and/or my lover were curious. The business trip to the Far East where she convinced me that it was safer we share a room with double beds, only to discover once we arrived that a king-sized bed was to be our shared sleeping accommodations!

I was in denial over what was happening. My lover at the time, insisted that something was going on and that I was deliberately overlooking it. I believed that my lover was simply being overprotective and possessive, a textbook case of co-dependency. Obviously at great risk, our relationship suffered irreparable damage from the ordeal.

One evening, Denise and I worked in the office until about 11:00 PM. We ordered dinner in and labored until we were brain-fatigued. She asked me if she could stay the night at my place; her apartment in the city was being occupied by friends of her family and she didn't feel like making the long trek upstate to her other home. I was fine with this, although I couldn't understand why a woman with two homes would want to sleep in my



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cramped studio apartment in one of the city's marginal neighborhoods. But, we were involved in an important project and I lived close to the office. It was terribly convenient.

After my shower, she was already in my bed. As I stood nearby setting the alarm clock, she asked me how could I wear such a tight t-shirt to bed. It was simply a sleeveless tee, typical sleep wear. Ignoring the comment, I climbed into bed next to her and lay silent for a few moments. After about ten minutes of silence, she asked me,

"When are we going to do it?"

It was so matter of fact, almost like it had been on the tip of her tongue all night.

I asked her to repeat what she had said because I was caught completely off guard, shocked and unprepared.

She said it again, "You heard me, when are we going to do it?"

I responded, "What about my lover and your husband?"

Denise whispered it harshly, "They don't have to know."

"But aren't you my boss and I'm your employee?" I had to confirm this fact with her.

"So? No one has to know, except you and me."

The reality shattered me. To say I was devastated would be a gross understatement simply because of what she initially represented to me. There it was, in my face, in my bed. I turned my back on her. The tension in that room was unbearable.

Everything changed. She was a woman not accustomed to the word "no" and her anger and feelings of rejection would reverberate throughout the duration of our acquaintance.

There was a drastic decrease in our close interaction. Although we tried to maintain a civility toward each other, now there was a great deal of stress between us.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent.... There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

Confused, disappointed, slightly flattered, I was feeling so many different conflicting things, but ultimately I felt manipulated and deceived.

She was a different person. My participation in conferences and projects were reduced. My requests for time off were frequently denied. My performance review was postponed indefinitely and she made it clear that a pay raise was not in my future. My work was being closely monitored and scrutinized to the point where we would have loud arguments in the office, even in front of co-workers. On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women only validated my denial and ignorance to the truth. Finally after one bitter disagreement I decided it was impossible for she and I to peacefully coexist together. I resigned from the best job I ever had.

For me, issues of empowerment among and for the African-American, Women, and Gay & Lesbian communities are essentially important being that I am a critical part of each of these groups. Within these groups, the African-American lesbian is at the bottom of each list, the least important, the most discriminated against and largely the most ignored. Due to this bitter piece of reality, I approach everyday life with these three common denominators in mind, and for these reasons I could not consciously persecute the already persecuted. The wide range of repercussions would be too deep. Although this harassment experience exploited everything that I am and represent, I had to take it to another level, of how the closet (someone else's) still destroyed my career and an important part of my life.

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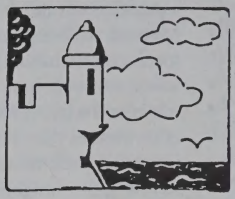

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Litany for Survival—
The Life &Work of Audre Lorde

Michelle Parkerson, filmmaker, on her involvement in this ground breaking work.

Producer/Director of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, Ada Gay-Griffin first met Lorde in 1978 while studying black feminist literature and theory at Hampshire College. Griffin has helped introduce the work of outstanding filmmakers of color to audiences in the U.S. Griffin has also spoken and written on media literacy and empowerment. *A Litany for Survival* is her first film, completed after 10 years of struggle to release this first film to link black, gay and women's rights.

Griffin invited Director Michelle Parkerson, a writer and independent filmmaker from Washington, D.C. to work on *Litany* eight years ago. She has served on the faculties of Temple University, the University of Delaware, Howard University and Northwestern University. In 1992, she received a Rockefeller Foundation Film/Video Fellowship. As a member of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women (8th Cycle), she wrote and directed "Odds and Ends," a black amazon science fiction story.

A Litany for Survival is an epic portrait of the eloquent, award-winning black lesbian poet, whose writing articulated some of the most important social and political visions of this century. Lorde, a controversial and celebrated African-American writer, cultural theorist and activist, embodied the connections among three dynamic social movements: the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. From Lorde's childhood in New York City's Harlem to her vibrant poetry and prose, from her battle against breast cancer to her forceful workshops and speeches, this powerful film explores her remarkable life.

Emory University's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life and ZAMI (Atlanta's group for African-American lesbians), in conjunction with the Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Project will present the Atlanta premiere of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lord* November 18 at 4 and 8 PM in Harland Cinema (located in the Dobbs University Center on Emory's Campus). Griffin and Parkerson will host a discussion/question and answer session following the viewing. This event is open to the public. Students and seniors will be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Audre Lord and her daughter.

admitted for $5, others for $10, payable at the door only.

Venus magazine profiled Parkerson to solicit her views on a myriad of concerns as a film executive, from challenges as a black gay woman to the impact of Lorde's works on her endeavors.

Venus Magazine: How did the vision for the film take place, and how did you go about facilitating that vision?

Michelle Parkerson: Basically my role in the project was to facilitate Ada's (Gay-Griffin, producer/director of the film) vision.

What this meant was the project was a collaborative effort on behalf of Ada, Audre Lorde, and myself. Audre was heavily involved in commenting on the footage, and the people we were to interview, giving us information for contacts and biography, as well as people to discuss and critique her work. It was firstly Ada's work and I was there, more or less, as a facilitator. Simply making sure the work makes it to the screen; I was the generator of the vision.

We wanted to present a film with Black Lesbians as the primary group or focus, to act as a document of Audre's present, not her past. Not a memorial. It would have been much easier to do something more celebratory that did not address some of the issues of Audre's works and life, including some of the contradictions. It would have not taken eight years to do something that was simply praising her work. We wanted something much more complex than that, because her work was so complex, and the film needed to represent the challenge that her work put out in the community-at-large. It was important to us that the film further her work in terms of awareness, as well as involve people in work with women with cancer, being a survivor of cancer, and how one does that. We needed to also look at Audre's role in the international movement of people of color, and how we can all be a part of that. We were concerned with much more than making a film that was entertaining on a cinematic level. This film had work to do, to act as a catalyst to motivate people to do the necessary work wherever they find themselves.

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Michelle Parkerson, Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

We also had an eye towards a group of people who may not know, or even care, who Audre Lorde is, or what her work reflects. We also had the task of drawing them in and keeping them interested, and import Audre's work internationally. Import in terms of the Gay and Lesbian community, import as far as feminism is concerned, import as far as feminist literature is concerned, and as far as American literature is concerned. There were a lot of levels that we were working to satisfy, to come up with a structure that would reach out, address, inform and touch people.

Venus: What central message do you have for young, black, gay/lesbian filmmakers attempting to mobilize their community?

Parkerson: The hope is that there exists now generations of Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers who are out and have been impacted by the works of those who have paved the way; Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Slyvia Rue, Joycelyn Taylor, Cheryl Dunae, Brent Hill, John Suggs, and Jamika Aljalan just to name a few. There are also their film and video works that one can study and see how to take an approach towards media and their sexuality as well as their race. In the mid 80's there arose a very visible group of sisters who were out with the material they were producing, letting the fact that they were Black Lesbians inform and shape the work as well. It was not peripheral to the material, it was not just about them.

For black people to have access to the media, still remains rare for Black people, in terms of controlling and shaping the images and utilizing the technology, it remains even rarer for Black women and especially Black Lesbian women. Black Gay and Lesbian film and video makers are showing the reality of how we love and struggle, have tensions, and make great achievements and how the translation comes across on the screen for brothers and sisters. It is very important that Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers are making Black Gay and Lesbian films.

Venus: In your opinion, why have our society's mature black lesbians and gay men chosen to remain invisible when they are needed as positive role models?

Parkerson: I think its where you are . It is a possibility that it's geographic. In Washington

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(D.C.) the Black Gay and Lesbian presence here has certainly been very viable and visible in city and municipal politics. We don't sit still for discrimination in this city. We have a level of protection because of that visibility; housing discrimination, employment discrimination, and social injustice get front page coverage, because we speak up and out against it.

It is phenomenal what is happening in the south and Atlanta. In the city you have the anonymity or the numbers of people to join in the community, and that is not the case in rural areas. The larger cities have larger gay and lesbian communities; New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., etc., as well as larger Black Gay and Lesbian communities. I think there is a certain conservatism that is pervasive the further south you get, almost as if the underlying consciousness is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I say that coming from a small southern town myself (Washington D.C.). We happen to have the focus of the nation in the sense of the world's attention here because of the government. Outside of the federal city, it is a small southern town, but there is a level of cosmopolitanism, and bodasciousness, a lack of not caring, which is a southern thing, about what people think and making it anyway. A large piece of southerner's care and comfort level in the community seems to be based upon other people's perception of us. Atlanta is coming, but there still exists this conservative atmosphere, and I'm wondering who that's for. Here (D.C.) and in Baltimore, and its a small southern town too, people have let it go. Baltimore may not be as cosmopolitan but it is progressive. That same vibration is present in Atlanta and growing. It happens whenever we acknowledge each other, when we start doing thing outside of the bars. Doing things that are empowering. Forming consciousness raising groups, things like Lesbians over 30-something, social and political action groups. Those kinds of things further our presence and empower each one of us to look into each other eyes. We can then look at things differently and say "Yeah, this is O.K.," "She's living fine, I'm doing O.K.," "How can I pass this on." These acts are very affirming. Venus Magazine is a part of that, it's a part of the affirmation and the rush towards progression and visibility. Thank god! you are down here.

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Ada Gay Griffin, Producer/ Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

The Lady in the Jewel Box—a film produced in 1987 was about the only woman to perform with the world famous Jewel Box Review, which was a troupe of female impersonators. The film was made for more reasons than the obvious. We wanted to preserve the history of the Jewel Box Theatre. It toured the Black theatre circuit and was the first integrated female impersonation show in the 50's and 60's. The show played across the country, to all sexual orientations, to black audiences that looked forward to seeing the show every year. The show had so much talent, there was no lip synching, they performed live, they had fabulous costumes, and the entertainers were beautiful. Their repertoire include the divas of the era; Dinah Washington, Lena Horne, and Billie Holiday, and they sang and danced to no end.

Mabel Hampton is another example of an old-school Black out Lesbian whose work was documented in the lesbian herstory archives. She has often been honored at national conferences by Black Gays and Lesbians.

There is a history of elders in our community that have struggled as we still struggle today. They dealt with tremendous pressures and invisibility. These examples tend to put into perspective your own personal ideas of how you're going to define your role as an African American and as Gay or Lesbian. It makes you that much more in tune to the realities of what you can and cannot do, and when it is appropriate to break barriers, and how one does that and survives. It brings it all together. It is important that we document the lives of our elders, its not all about the 20-something generation and what's happening now. There are people we need to look back on and that has always fortified us. Particularly as African people. When we look back at the legacy of people, and it will certainly fortify us as lesbians and gay people. When we can look at our own race and know James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Mabel Hampton, and Bayard Rustin were great black gay Americans.

About Audre Lorde

February 18, 1934–November 17, 1992

Audre Lorde is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Her writing has been translated in seven foreign languages.

Born the youngest of three daughters and raised in a West Indian household in Harlem, Audre Lorde began reading and reciting poetry at a very young age. She often used poetry to communicate with others. When she could no longer find poems to express her feelings, she began writing her own poetry. Her first published poem appeared in *Seventeen* magazine while she was a student at Hunter High School. Audre Lorde later attended Hunter College in New York City where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1959. She regularly attended and read with the Harlem Writer's Guild, and cited Langston Hughes and John Henrick Clarke as early mentors. She received a masters degree in Library Science from Columbia University in 1961 and worked as a librarian at Mount Vernon Public Library until 1963. She was head librarian at Town School Library in New York City from 1966 to 1968.

In 1968, Audre Lorde became poet in residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and published her first volume of poetry, *The First Cities*. Lorde's third volume of poetry, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, published by Broadside Press (Detroit) in 1973, was nominated for a National Book Award. *Coal*, published in 1976 by W.W. Norton and Company, was the first of Lorde's books to be released by a major publisher. A compilation of her first two books, it brought her work to a broader readership. W.W. Norton published five of her six subsequent volumes of poetry, collections which chart the development of her complex poetic and personal vision.

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, Lorde's writings about her illness were published in *The Cancer Journals* which won the American Library Association Gay Caucus Book of the Year Award for 1981. Other prose included a biographical novel, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1982), and *A Burst of Light* (1986) in which Lorde, again diagnosed with cancer, returned to prose to help heal herself and inspire others. Audre Lorde's final volume of poetry, *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Disease* (1993) was published posthumously.

Audre Lorde worked intensively with women of color in many different countries, was a founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, a founding mother of Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, and addressed two national marches: the 1983 20th Anniversary Commemorative March on Washington for Justice, Peace and Equality; and the First National March for Lesbian and Gay Liberation in 1979, also in Washington, D.C.

Audre Lorde was awarded the Walt Whitman Citation for Merit for poets and was named state poet of New York for 1991–1993. And she received honorary doctorate degrees from Oberlin College (1989) and Haverford College (1990). She retired to the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1987, continuing to work until her death in 1992.

Essex Charles Hemphill

April 16, 1957–November 4, 1995

Essex Charles Hemphill, poet, editor, was born in Chicago on April 16, 1957. He was raised in Washington, D.C. and as a youngster began perfecting the art of writing prolific, often controversial poetry about his life as a Black, gay man in America.

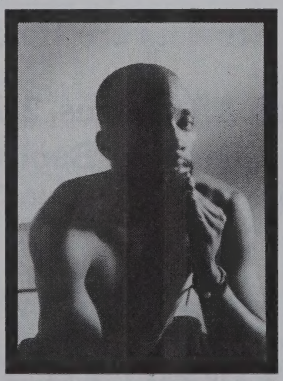
He founded **Nethula Journal of Contemporary Literature** in 1978. He ran the magazine several years before becoming more and more active as a performer. In 1983 he formed **Cinque**, a trio of performance artists.

Essex received Fellowship in Literature from the D.C. Commission for the Arts (1982, 1983, and 1988). He is the recipient of a 1985 Fellowship in Literature (Poetry) from the national Endowment of the Arts. And co-recipient of a 1986 and 1987 Painted Bride Arts Center New Works Residency.

His work has been published in **Black Scholar, Essence Magazine, Callaloo, Painted Bride Quarterly, Gargoyle, Outweek, Blackheart, Obsidian, New York Native, James White Review, Hometowns, I Hear A Symphony** and, still, several other North American publications.

Selections of his poetry are anthologized in **Artists Against Apartheid, The Poet Upstairs, In the Life, New Men, New Minds and Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men**, which he also edited, earning him a Lambda Award.

His work in print includes three self-published chapbooks, **Diamonds was in the Kitty** (1982), **Plums** (1983), **Earth Life** (1985), and a book-length collection, **Conditions** (1986).



Author Essex Charles Hemphill died Nov. 4, 1995.

Mr. Hemphill's work is featured in the films **Lookin' for Langston, Tongues Untied** and **Black Is, Black Ain't** (director Marlon Riggs' last film..)

In 1992, his first book of poetry, **Ceremonies**, was published, earning him the National Library Association's New Authors in Poetry Award.

In 1993, he worked in Santa Monica, California, with the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, Visiting Scholars Program. 1994 saw hime in Philadelphia, fulfilling the requirements of his Pugh Fellowship Award. It was in Philadelphia where he died of complications associated with AIDS on November 4, 1995. Mr. Hemphill will be funeralized and buried in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his mother, Mantalene Clark Hemphill, three sisters and one brother, all younger. There are close friends and scores of admirers who will miss the dynamic element he brought to everyone's life through his words.

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In The Spirit; In The Life!

There is a Balm—

The Black Church Leadership Conference

By Craig Washington

The Second Annual Black Church National Education and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS was held on May 22-24, 1995, at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. Religious leaders, scholars and community workers from all over the country gathered to pray, plan and implement outreach and ministry efforts. The Conference was produced by The Balm in Gilead, Inc., a secular organization which provides education and technical support for African-American religious institutions engaged in HIV/AIDS education, services and advocacy. Founder Pernessa Seele enjoined the support of the nation's leading black spiritual dignitaries to ensure full participation. Within the context of this epidemic, the Black church must resume its historical role and relevance to the community that needs it now more than ever. This Conference was a groundbreaking step toward this process of reclamation.

This interdenominational summit served as both an educational forum addressing theological doctrine and practice and as a bonafide revival meeting replete with prayer, singing and shouting, inspiring its attendants to continue the struggle with renewed courage. The list of facilitators included such luminaries as Rev. Rainey Cheeks (Inner Light Unity Fellowship), Phil Wilson (AIDS Project Los Angeles) and Atlanta's own Byllye Avery (National Black Woman's Health Project) and Dr. Barbara King (Hillside). This diverse mix of pastors, gay activists and educators brought forth a wide range of vision and expertise.

The opening ceremony included an African libation, an HIV-focused invocation and greetings from Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Woman) and Dorothy Triplett (Center for Disease Control). Following the commencement, a panel of PWAs shared their stories of adversity and triumph as long-term survivors of HIV and other challenges (incest, substance abuse, neglect). The second day opened with a responsive reading calling to "God of the gay and God of the straight...God of Us All...Grant that in this safe space the silence will be broken so that the healing of HIV and AIDS may begin."

The workshop plenary offered an impressive menu of topics such as "The Church Beyond Homophobia" and "The Sexual and Emotional Health of Black Women." The black theology workshop provided provocative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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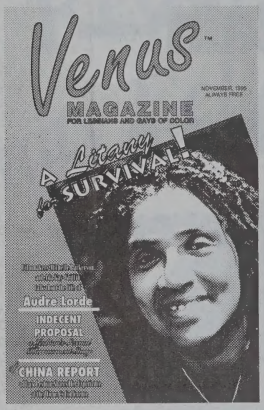

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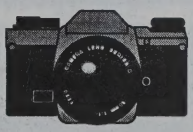

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insights regarding the Church's stance on sin and acceptance. Rev. Kelly Douglas stated that we must examine the black community in a historical context in order to understand how the Church "sees" and interprets God. In his address about homophobia, Dr. West underscored the Church's responsibility to grapple honestly with the sexual lives of his congregants. "Underneath our dresses and our three-piece suits we are all funky creatures," Dr. West attested, Author Haki Madhubuti facilitated a workshop entitled "The Sexual Responsibility of Black Men" and neglected to mention gay and bisexual issues. When challenged by the attendants, Madhubuti claimed to have insufficient knowledge of the subject. One of the participants cautioned, "You need to learn."

The final day began with a rousing rendition of "There is A Balm in Gilead" and offered a series of skill-building tracks. I attended the "HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Training for Ministers" delivered by Rev. Terri Griffen-Price (H.E.A.L.) and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones (Howard Univ). Thank you God for Rv. Price, a passionate speaker who got happy she advised us how to approach religious leaders. She advised us to challenge intolerant pastors and any theologies bereft of compassion. Dr. Farajaje-Jones addressed "erotophobia" (fear of the erotic and its power) and "gynophobia" (fear and hatred of women) as processes that fuel hostility towards gays and lesbians. The workshop offered methods of developing curricula to train leaders to respond to HIV/AIDS with compassion and competency.

I was deeply moved by the level of commitment among those in attendance. It was so refreshing to witness such exuberance despite the barriers which often thwart our work. I returned from this meeting feeling completely recharged, my wavering faith restored. I am happy to announce that several Atlantan spiritual leaders and activists are collaborating to organize a Week of Prayer during which churches and mosques would devote their energies to address HIV/AIDS in their congregations and community. Like the Harlem-based original event, the Week of Prayer can be celebrated through a gospel concert, ministry, bereavement service, revival, seminar or any activity motivated by a healing spirit. The Week of Prayer is tentatively scheduled for the first week of March 1996. Brothers and sisters in the life (closeted or not) need to take active roles in this event and the planning process has already begun. For more information,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

The Worship Service at the Second Annual Black Church National Educational and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS held May 22–24 at Howard University. (Top) New York's Marjorie Hill joins in, at right.

Redefining Our Faith

By Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee

The year is 1995 and African-American people who are "In The Life" are reclaiming an intricately heretical aspect of their culture— black church. After having collars and Bibles used to invalidate and oppress us, we can now use them as a source of freedom and liberation. We are finally moving toward the acceptance that God is love, and love is for everyone, regardless of race, creed, physical or financial ability, or sexual orientation.

There has never been any doubt about our existence or contribution to the black church, and we have done so and probably will continue to do so despite being denied the liberty to do so. The Unity Fellowship Church movement and Bishop Carl Bean have empowered those who have been robbed and stripped of family and community via the church.

Gail Booker, Tony Daniels, Michael-Tone Covington, Tamara Irons, and Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee (left to right), Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship members at the National Unity Convocation in Los Angeles.

No longer do we have to live in fear of going to hell for loving another human being. Freedom is here. No longer do we have to put aside being African-American to worship as les/bi/gay/trans people. For we now have a worship institution of our very own.

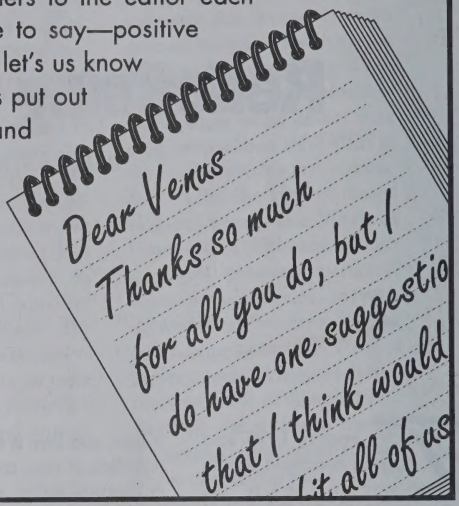
It's 1995, and Unity Fellowship Church is carrying its message of liberation theology to black gay people through its nine churches, in the United States.

It's 1995, and we now serve proudly and openly in church offices that we have always held.

It's 1995, and our people finally at last have the choice. Somebody, anybody say Amen.

We Love Hearing From You

Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Linus Lynell

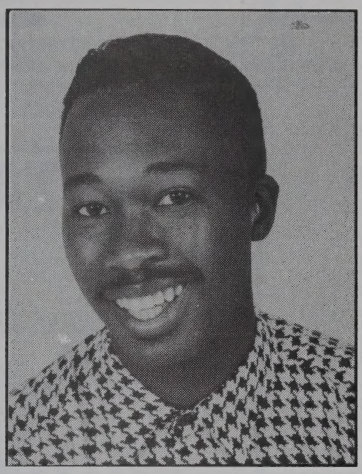
Age:..... 31

Status:..... Very single

Career: ..... Non-profit administrator; Performing artist

Hometown:.. Flint, Michigan

Latest Book:. "Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America" by Nathan McCall



Linus is currently living in Dallas, Texas, and loves his work as Associate Coordinator for The Men's Gathering, a social support group for African-American men. He is also anspiring writer and will soon contribute articles about the black gay male experience in Dallas.

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Center Stage AT LAST!

Oleta Adams performs for HRCF

Songstress/Diva Oleta Adams.

Over 1,500 people turned out at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit for the Human Rights Campaign Fund's Michigan Dinner.

The black-tie event entitled "Center Stage at Last" could have just as easily been named "One Enchanted Evening."

The top two floors were reserved for a pre-event, the annual Women's Ice Breaker (very appropriately named). The third level hosted Washington V.I.P.'s and other dignitaries including Detroit's mayor, Dennis Archer.

Socialite June Washington, the women's outreach chair and African-American lesbian/Diva, is credited for the largest black gay and lesbian turnout at an HRCF event ever. (At $150–$300 per plate, that's some pretty fierce networking!)

Cheryl Troup, also a lesbian of color, served as Primary Event co-chair. Cheryl feels that the campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, is not only sincere by very serious about changing the stoic white male image traditionally associated with its annual events.

The evening began with a broadway style strolling dinner. When the lights finally dimmed, we found our seats and were dazzled by comedian Georgia Ragsdale. We roared with laughter as she talked about what it's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Commedienne Georgia Ragsdale.

like to visit a gay male bar. "BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! You can feel the music pounding six blocks away!"

Ragsdale might be the first out lesbian to hit network television with her own show, a sitcom series set to air this fall on ABC.

Her co-host, actor Dan Butler, of "Roseanne," "Picket Fences," and "X-Files" to name a few was equally entertaining; "I'm not a straight guy but I play one on T.V."

The highlight of the evening was a sizzling performance by two-time Grammy nominee Oleta Adams. She swooned us with all our favorites, including "Circle of One," "Get Here," "Hold Me for Awhile," and "Window of Hope."

Oleta says she identifies with singers like Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. "You can hear the purity of sound and emotion, but also the discipline, technique and sophistication. That's what my music is all about. Getting back to the part that's been left out since this synthetic, sterile, non-feeling sound has come in. Everyone wants to classify me, put me in a category. This is highly emotional music, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's time to get back to romance."

Calm down girls!! This diva is happily married to drummer John Cushon. Oleta says, "I made him wait twelve years! A girl's got to be sure!" Look for her new CD, entitled "Moving On," to be released in late November.

As the applause faded the scene changed to a serious "house party" in the Grand Lobby, complete with dancing, exotic cocktails and hot music by D.J. Serend 'N' Effect Tyler.

Activist/Diva June Washington (2nd from Left) and Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran (2nd from right) pose with members of Detroit's Billionaire's Boy Club in the Grand Lobby.

Fabulous Belinda Jefferies of HRCF's Women's Committee at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Marketing Director for a family-owned business, Belinda was also director of sales for the annual program booklet.

Hats off to HRCF Detroit! Who says a bunch of people in formal wear can't have fun?!

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

SisterHelp Community Fund, along with Hospitality Atlanta, Sisters of 30 Something Special and Dyfferent Gyrl Productions, is asking for donations to assist Cindi Joshua, a friend and sister to our community. Ms. Joshua is in need of a kidney transplant, and financial contributions, medical referrals, information and/or suggestions are welcome. Please call 707-6866 with any help.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute presents the **8th Annual Creating Change Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement!** To be held **November 10–12, 1995** at the Westin Hotel Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan. Featured guests include **Elias Farajaje-Jones** (a Spanish speaking, afrikan, native-american and an anarchist guerilla, theologian/AIDS terorrist/writer/cultural critic/performance artist/ritual technician) and **Urvashi Vaid** (a community organizer and attorney, past NGLTF executive director and author of Virtual Equality.)

On October 19, Deputy Assistant to President Clinton, Marshe Scott, wrote Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Humanr Rights Campaign Fund: "I am pleased to let you know that on Friday, Oct. 20, 1995, the **President will formally endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.** As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, I know that you and your organization have worked tirelessly to promote passage of this important legislation. The leadership role taken by the Human Rights Campaign to rally public support for this issue has culminated in the bi-partisan endorsements from over 157 members of Congress. The President is delighted to join with you and our many friends in Congress who endorse and support this important civil rights legislation."

Neighborhood Playhouse will hold auditions for "To Kill a Mockingbird" with cold readings at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday November 12th and Monday, November 13th. Needed are 1 African-American male (18–50) and 1 African-American female (20–50). No appointment necessary. Call 404/373-3904 for more information.

AID Atlanta now offers a **Support Group for African-American Men Living with HIV/AIDS.** Group meets every Tuesday from 7–9 p.m. at AID Atlanta offices (1438 W. Peachtree St., NW, Ste 100.) Call 404-885-6800, ext. 231 for more information.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1996. The First Community-Wide meeting for Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Celebration will be held at Karats Niteclub, 511 Peachtree Street, downtown Atlanta (across from Crawford Long. The meeting will begin promptly at 7 p.m. The agenda will include a review of Pride '95, new ideas for '96 and discussion about Board and Steering Committee selections. All are welcome! Let's make Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 a world-class event!

Artists in all disciplines (except film) are being sought for the **Fourth Annual Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (AGALAF).** The festival willbe held in Decatur **April 11–14, 1996.** Deadline for submissions is Nov. 15 ($10 fee) and Dec. 15 ($15 fee). For entry forms, call 404/874-8710 or write AGALAF, P.O. Box 55475, Atlanta, GA 30308.

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund was announced by Zami for African-American lesbians in Atlanta. This scholarship will be awarded to an African-American lesbian student who best embodies the spirit of Audre Lorde. All financial contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to Zami at P.O. Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

World AIDS Day

December 1, 1995

On World AIDS Day, an international event held on December 1 each year to bring awareness to the pandemic, will be commemorated by a number of activities hosted by AID Atlanta. The World AIDS Day 1995 theme, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," highlights the importance of equality and solidarity in the global response to AIDS.

The Atlanta Hawks, who will play the Mavericks on December 1, will host "Time Out for Awareness," and donate a portion of their proceeds to a number of local AIDS charities. Call (404) 827-DUNK for more information. Also during the day, houses of worship and individuals are asked to ring a bell fifteen times, once for each year of the epidemic, at 1:50 p.m. AID Atlanta is asking people to participate in this event by purchasing a handmade, limited edition, silver plated bell at the benefit art gallery Koolhipfunkystuff, located at 1030 Monroe Drive. Bells can also be purchased by calling the gallery at (404) 607-1095, and all proceeds will benefit AID Atlanta.

The opportunity to educate people about HIV/AIDS will be a priority for AID Atlanta on World AIDS Day, and a number of educational events are scheduled. AID Atlanta youth peer educators will be at North Atlanta High School doing presentations "Teen to Teen" in health education classes, and at the Centers for Disease Control participating in panel discussions on issues relating to teens and HIV. These peer educators will also present to the Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, and at St. Luke's Episcopal Church High School on Sunday, December 3.

WAOS Radio, a Spanish speaking station located at 1600 AM will air the documentary, "AIDS Does Not Discriminate" on December 1, after which listeners will have the opportunity to speak with bilingual staff persons at the Georgia AIDS Information Line (800) 551-2728, a state service available in conjunction with AID Atlanta. There will also be a mobilization of AID Atlanta's Hispanic Outreach Workers, who will visit Hispanic community groups, grocery stores, and beauty parlors to provide visitors with HIV/AIDS information.

AID Atlanta's African-American Outreach team will distribute red ribbons and flyers at key MARTA stations, and will also assist the Atlanta University Center in their World AIDS Day program at Spelman's Living and Learning Center. The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual outreach volunteers will conduct a "Bar Blitz," distributing safer sex kits and promoting a "Get Tested" message by providing information on HIV testing locations.

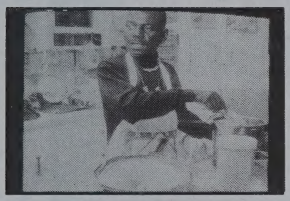
The AID Atlanta Speaker's Bureau will experience their busiest day of the year, with engagements booked at schools, work places, churches and community groups, with additional requests still being made. To schedule a speaker, please contact Chris Parsons (404) 885-6800, ext. 231. AID Atlanta volunteers are also staffing booths at a number of health fairs across the city.

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities **November 22–26.** Featured activi-



ties include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't;" workshops on "Gay Life in Africa" and "A Gathering of Old Queens;" and a closing dinner dance.

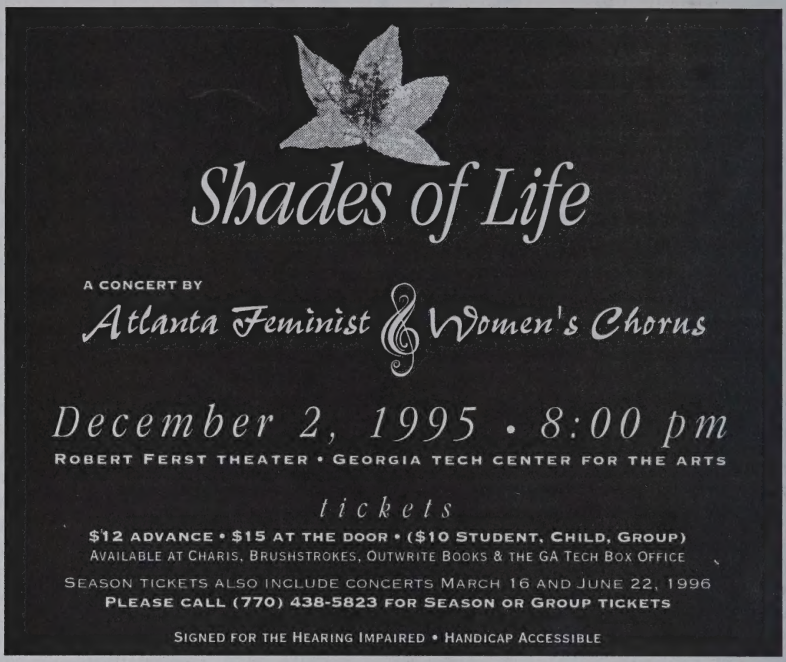
The first meeting for the **Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS Planning Commission was held on Oct. 21** at Believe and Receive Ministry. This Commission will include a diverse mix of African-American clergy, community workers and volunteers who will collaborate to establish a Week of Prayer in March 1996 for African-American churches in Atlanta. The goal of this event is to enjoin the faith community, mass media and gospel radio stations to broaden HIV awareness, education and services for our people. Based on the Harlem Week of Prayer in New York (established in 1988), the Week of Prayer is a coordinated week of activities in which participants can demonstrate their commitment in various ways (gospel concert, food drive, HIV seminar, bereavement service). The Planning Committee will actually determine how the Week of Prayer will be observed in Atlanta. This is an historic opportunity to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness event which the African-American community can embrace as its own. We would like you to be a part of the planning process. The institute for Minority AIDS Prevention Studies (I-MAPS) will provide technical assistance for the Atlanta replication of the Week of Prayer. For more information please call Craig Washington at (404) 885-6800 X277 or Pastor Julia Robinson at (404) 286-9309.

Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be in Atlanta Nov. 17-18, promoting her new book, "Lessons in Living." Book signings will be held at Visions 3000, Clarkston, Ga., Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m.; Chapter 11, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m.; and Truth Bookstore, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. "Lessons in Living(Anchor Books, Hardcover; Nov. 7, 1995; $19.95), is an entirely original collection of inspirational

writing in which the celebrated provides insight into the universal quest for faith and spiritually that inevitably occurs as a result of life's challenges. It explores issues that are of interest to all people: self-empowerment, love, self-worth, faith and commitment, and the journey of life. For more information call Truth Bookstore at 404/523-3240.

Elizabeth Glaser, co-founder of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, **was the recipient of a Special Inspiration Award presented by The Noel Foundation/The United Nations Development Fund for Women** in October at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. The award was presented as part of the Noel Foundation/UNIFEM Awards Ceremony, "A Celebration of Inspiration and Commitment" that honored six outstanding women from around the world, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Glaser died of complications from AIDS on Dec. 3, 1994. The only foundation of its kind in the US, the Pediatric AIDS Foundation identifies, funds and conducts basic research into the prevention and treatment of HIV infection, as well as providing public education and information about the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS among women and children. For more information contact Victoria Thomas, Communications Manager, Pediatric AIDS Foundation, (310) 395-9051.

The Kick Publishing Co has successfully published its ambitious new publication, entitled KICK! Magazine for one full year. The primary focus of this bold monthly publication is to explore black gay and lesbian urban culture in America from a conservative midwestern perspective. Over the past year this publication has challenged itself to explore the diversity of a lifestyle which receives little to no attention from popular mainstream or major gay and lesbian publications.



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Ten Percent in the Million Man March

by Keith Boykin

"Black by Birth/Gay by God/Proud by Choice." Those were the words my trembling hands scribbled on the posterboard in the brisk morning air at a black gay rally a few hours before the Million Man March.

Hundreds of black gay men and a handful of lesbians joined me on that Monday in an historic openly gay contingent in the Million Man March, proudly representing the tens of thousands of black gay men who were there but could not be a part of our group. Our pre-march rally drew prominent speakers from around the country, including noted civil rights activist Derrick Bell, who is heterosexual, and the black, openly gay mayor of Cambridge, Kenneth Reeves.

Uncertain what lies ahead, we left our rally and quietly began the 30-minute procession to the Million Man March assembly on the Mall. A few passersby hurriedly moved out of the way, two people driving their cars along the adjoining streets honked their horns in support and a number of pedestrians on the other side of the street stopped and stared.

Sensing no negative reaction to our presence, our group grew increasingly ambitious and empowered. We began to chant: "We're Black! We're Gay! We wouldn't have it any other way!" Still no one in the crowed of people we approached reacted critically. The chant became louder and bolder: "Gay Men! (Woof). Of African Descent." As we marched into the multitude of people assembled on the blocked off streets, the crowd reaction seemed to change from curiosity to intimidation and the throngs of black men parted like the Red Sea in front of us.

A police officer on motorcycle idled alongside our group as if he anticipated a confrontation. But as we marched closer and closer to the rally stage, the crowd reaction grew increasingly and overwhelmingly positive, and even enthusiastic. Some raised their fists in solidarity, dozens whipped out their cameras and video equipment to take pictures, but only one of the thousands of people I saw did or said anything homophobic. Gesturing his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

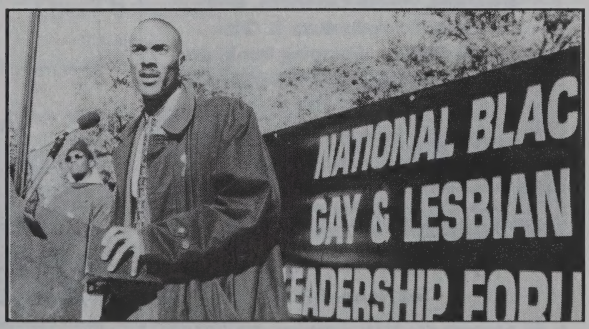

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Keith Boykin, executive director of Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum at the Million Man March pre-rally.

A Litany for Survival:
The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

Charis, ZAMI & Emory's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life proudly present
A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AUDRE LORDE at 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
Harland Cinema Emory Univ. campus, to benefit ZAMI'S Audre Lorde scholarship fund. Reception following 8 p.m. showing with the director Michelle Parkerson & producer Ada Gay Griffin. $5 admission at the door. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

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thumbs downward, he yelled, "God didn't make no mistakes." One of our group shot back, "You're right!" We kept marching.

The lesson in this experience is that when we believe in ourselves enough to come out of the closet and be open about who we are as black gay men and lesbians, our community not only accepts us, they respect us more. For many march participants, that Monday was the first time they had ever seen black homosexuals openly, visibly and unabashedly acknowledging themselves as part of the black community. Given the opportunity to succumb to peer pressure prejudice, they took the high road and greeted our participation. They know that the battle for black liberation requires many soldiers, and in this army, at least, gays are welcome in the military.

What happened on the Mall that day was the beginning of the revolution in our thinking as black people and as black gay people. Black men loving black men is a revolutionary act. In a culture whose popular music and film glorify black-on-black violence, the simple act of loving our brothers as brothers becomes an act of rebellion against the fratricidal status quo.

Who is better suited to help black men learn the value of loving one another as brothers than black gay men, who have been loving one another as brothers for years? Who is better suited to demonstrate to black men how to care for and show affection for one another than black gay men, who have been caring for and showing affection towards one another when no one else would? And who is better suited to lead the long overdue revolution against patriarchy and violence against women than black gay men? Indeed, as Black Panther leader Huey Newton presciently observed in 1970, "a homosexual could be the most revolutionary" of the revolutionaries.

"It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being an African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population."

"That's beautiful," he said.

I saw the revolution in the faces of brothers who smiled at me, or the ones who shook my hand and greeted me at the march. One brother asked about the sticker I wore on my coat, a cutout of the African continent in the gay movement's rainbow colors. "What does that mean?" "It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being and African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population." "That's beautiful," he said.

Despite the welcome extended by the march participants, the march organizers and speakers missed two crucial opportunities: first, to include an openly gay speaker, and, second, to teach black men how to save their lives. While AIDS is now the leading cause of death for black men between the ages of 25 and 44, the message of AIDS prevention was never discussed at the march. Unfortunately, this disease will continue to take a toll on our community so long as black people and our so-called leaders remain to afraid to address publicly issues of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation.

Nevertheless, I hope the presence of our openly gay contingent will help to begin the much needed dialogue on black sexuality and teach the march organizers what the vast majority of rank and file marchers already know: black gay men and lesbians are not a threat to black unity—they are the key to it.

Keith Boykin is Executive Director of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and author of the forthcoming book, One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America, to be published by Doubleday.

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- *Graduated Yale Medical School. Medical Internship Einstein Medical Center*

Alvaro J. Lopez, M.D.

- *6 years experience with HIV and anti-retroviral therapy.*
- *Access to investigational studies and the latest therapies including 3TC and multidrug antiviral therapy.*
- *Board certified, internal medicine and infectious disease.*
- *Graduated University of Illinois College of Medicine*

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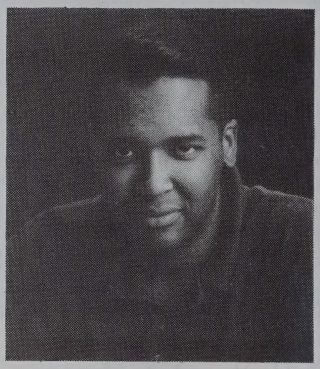

Like me, you probably expect professionalism and experience and appreciate privacy and diversity when it comes to your health care provider.

At Infectious Disease Consultants, Inc. the physicians diagnose and find treatment for a variety of infections and specialize in the treatment of HIV infections.

Doctors Louise S. Tashjian and Alvaro J. Lopez, patient advocate John Hankins, R.N., and the accepting and diverse staff strive to create a comfortable, private atmosphere, where you and I can receive the medical attention we need.

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Infectious Disease Consultants, Inc.

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770.939.1601
Fax.270.1711

Good Doctor, Good Patient

Three AIDS care experts have published Good Doctors, Good Patients: Partners in HIV Treatment to communicate the personal qualities, attitudes, and medical strategies that they have found to be associated with prolonged and healthier survival among people with HIV. Written for people with HIV, their caregivers and doctors, the book reflects the author's professional and personal experiences, including their AIDS long-term Survivor Study, which followed nearly 100 men and women with HIV and featured interviews with 25 leading AIDS specialists.

"Good Doctors, Good Patients provides important insights into critical issues involved in the relationship between a person with HIV and his or her health care provider." commented David M. Gold, former Executive Editor, Gay Men's Health Crisis' Treatment Issues. "It is useful for people with AIDS, their friends, family, caregivers, and especially health care providers and mental health professionals."

"The book is extremely helpful" says Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran, "It told exactly how to handle my feelings of helplessness during a friend's terminal illness."

Copies of Good Doctors, Good Patients may be obtained from NCM publishers for $4.50 for shipping and handling. Requests should be sent to NCM publishers at: NCM Publishers, Dept. JL; 200 Varick St.; New York, NY 10014. Those wishing to receive multiple copies should contact Judy Leong at (212) 691-9100.

The book itself is being provided free of charge as a service by Burroughs Wellcome Co. The company discovered, developed, and manufactures a wide range of therapies for the management of HIV disease, and continues to support a broad research program.

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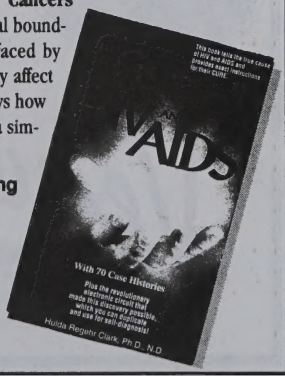

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Night Songs

by Penny Mickelbury, 1995, Naiad

Reviewed by A.J. Hines

Stabbing victims. All prostitutes. A low priority for the Washington, D.C. police Lieutenant Gianna Maglione, the head of the Hate Crimes Unit, feels the crimes have significance and are only the tip of an ugly iceberg. Plagues by homophobia and political patronage, Lt. Maglione forges ahead.

Meanwhile, Maglione's lover, African-American newspaper reporter, Mimi Patterson is combing the perilous streets in search of her missing informants. Lt. Maglione refuses to discuss her cases with her lover. Her stubbornness inadvertently put Mimi and their relationship in danger.

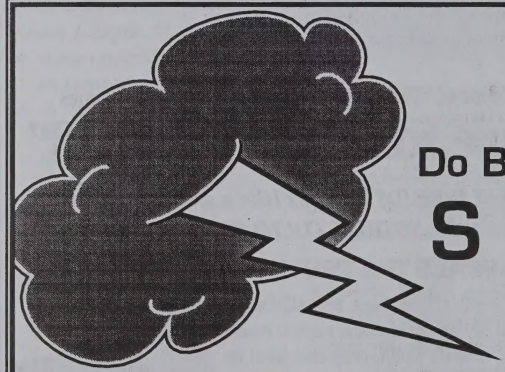
As an African-American writer, Mickelbury is able to address subjects that have traditionally been ignored in the lesbian mystery genre; racism and socio-economic class prejudice.

Night Songs is the second book in the series. Mickelbury's first, Keeping Secrets, pits the police Lt. against the newspaper reporter. They struggle with police procedure that are contrary to the public's right to know. The conflict becomes more complicated by strong sexual feelings.

Mickelbury has strong characters with distinct personalities and similar agendas. However, they have very different approaches which enhances the story and creates real romance.

PHOTOGRAPH BY D.F. HOUSTON

Author Penny Mickelbury



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Miss Dot & Miss Lorde

By Doris L. Harris

On Nov. 17, 1992
10 days before her 50th birthday
my mother let go of the mosaic design
that was her life.
with its missing pieces, delicate thin lines
and healed over slashes,
Cancer hadn't won, she had simply taken her marbles
and moved on,
Same day, another sistuh,
a poet pure,
a lover of women, an explorer
began her own journey,
although they have taken different paths
I know, they'll meet along the way
introductions won't be necessary,
my mother will recognize Miss Lorde as the woman
who wrote all those books, her want to be a radical
call herself a feminist, must be going though a phase
just need a good man, lesbian daughter,
was always sending her, after one of their fights
and Miss Lorde will know Miss Dot very well,
seen her hiding between the lines of her poetry
a weary warrior, who despite her war stories
could never say, I want
I need,
who found out damn near too late
that battle scars, are not love,
they'll embrace
my mother will be the first to let go,
she'll walk away, fast
that's how she walked, talked, lived
Miss Lorde will be able to keep the pace, her legs are
much longer than a nine year old
who's asking for money, to buy a Easter dress,
and she's tougher, as tough as these times have been
for poor black women
and she's wise, wise enough to know that my mother
was running,
from something as unrecognizable as destiny,
with each step, Miss Lorde will see just how fragile
she really was, as fragile as a promise
made to a child

CONCERTS

Atlanta Minority Aids Council and GRP Recording Company Present

URBAN KNIGHTS

featuring Ramsey Lewis Art Porter, Omar Hakim, Victor Bailey Be 2, 8:00 PM at The Lincoln Theater, 1215 U Street, Washington, D.C. For ticket information call (202) 328 6000 or Ticketmaster at (202) 432-SEAT.

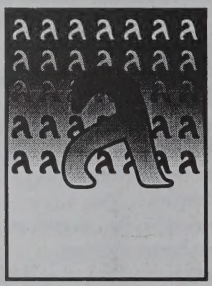
Shades of Life

a concert by Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, December 2, 1995 * 8:00 PM; $12 advance & $15 at door, $10 student, child, group. Call (770) 438-5823 for information. (Pictured: Chantel Wright, Asst. Director AFWC)

CONFERENCES

Eighth Annual Creating Change Conference sponsored by NGLTF in Detroit, MI, featuring Elias Farajafe-Jones and Urvashi Vaid, among others. Call (202) 332-6483, ext. 3209 for information.

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership



Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

EVENTS

Nov. 19th—WOOBABI Productions annual trip to

Atlantic City, New Jersey

For information, contact Bobbi & Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

FILM

CLOSING NIGHT FEATURE - Thurs.November 2 at 8 PM Anthology Film Archive (AFA) 32 2nd Avenue @ 2nd Street

Black Nations/ Queer Nations?

directed by Shari Frilot. We are happy to present the World Premiere of this experimental documentary about the historic March 1995 conference which provided an international account of identity politics in black and queer community. Featured participants include South African activists Simon Nkoli & Zachie Achmat, Essex Hemphill, Isaac Julien, Coco Fusco, Kobena Mercer, and Barbara Smith. (Discussion & Closing Night Party to follow).

NO MORE Sweets for You

(Sun, 11/5, 6 PM, KF; Sat, 11/11, 7 PM, AFA) These new film and video shorts unfold the fantasies, trauma and schizophrenia of solo-ness. In an era of corporate grunge, queer modification, empowerment politics and right-wing cyborgs, how do the unassimilated survive without being smashed, named or forced to participate?—Elisabeth Subrin, Curator.

JUNGLI BOOGIE: Queer South Asian Film & Video (Fri, 11/3 PM 9 PM AFA; Sat, 11/11 9 PM KF) A collection of video

and film work by queer South Asian artists from around the world and around the corner. Includes new works by Hima B. and Prathiba Parmar. (And don't miss the after party thrown by SALGA, the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association).—David Dasharath Kalal & Gita' Reddy, Curators.

On Thurs., November 16th, 1995 at 7:00 PM, The Atlanta African Film Society's 11th Annual Hoyt Fuller Festival Film, co-sponsored with Morris Brown College International Student Series, will premiere

CHOCOLATE CITY

a film that takes a realistic look at today's college life. CHOCOLATE CITY, a student-made, feature length film, shot on Florida A&M University campus, stresses the importance of making sound decisions in the nineties.. The film will premier at Morris Brown College, 643 Martin Luther King Drive, SW in Atlanta. For further information, please call the Atlanta African Film Society's Hot-line number (404) 818-6444. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members

Also, on Friday, 7 PM, November 17th at Georgia Pacific Auditorium, 133 Peachtree St in downtown Atlanta, The Hoyt Fuller Film Festival continues with NY filmmaker, Camille Billops, and James Hatch introducing their latest feature, the

KKK BOUTIQUE AIN'T JUST REDNECKS

It's a film that examines the issues of racism in America. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will

celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities November 22–26. Featured activities include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't" and many more activities (see 411 in this issue for details.)

GALLERY OPENINGS

November 10–30: The Recent Works of Michael Morgan, Didier Cameau, Quashelle Curtis, William Downs, III, and

Kemba Sewer. The five African Americans cover the entire spectrum of art. Michael and Quashelle are painters. Their pieces are brightly colored and instantly appealing. Didier is the sculptor in the group, working mostly in metal, and uses the figure as a starting point for his more abstract compositions. William works both in printmaking and drawing, very figurative and stylized. Finally, Kemba has chosen the computer as her tool. Her images are very personal and deal with her childhood, growing up black in America. Artists' reception Friday, November 10, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

MEETING

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96

Community Wide Meeting will be held at Karats, Monday, Nov. 20, 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church with a Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atlanta. 404/388-4624. Bring your favorite covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. All inclusive special rate of $149 per person/double occupancy valid until Nov. 6, 1995. Ask for Dazzle Production Rates. For more information call 215-242-4255.

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of New York

GALA

10:00 PM - 3:00 AM Bronx, New York; Open Bar, Buffet, Champagne, $50.00 per person. Bess Knowings 718-992-9073.

VENUS MAGAZINE's 1st Anniversary. Celebration. January 13–16. Watch for Details Next Issue.

Venus™ MAGAZINE FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

PARTIES

November 10...

FIESTA!

Getting Older Latin Style by Cha-Cha Productions. 11 PM–4 AM. Revolutions, Atlanta. (404) 621-5743.

Dec. 9th—Gloria Wells & Associates Annual Holiday

House Party

at the Days Inn, Washington, D.C., TIME: 10-3:00 AM Tickets $12 in advance & $15 at the door. For information, please contact (301) 596-6167.

Dec. 10th—NEFERTITI PRODUCTIONS present

A Holiday Extravaganza

at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9 PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore at (301) 596-6167 or Winnie at (202) 484-0550.

READINGS

A poetry reading for the upcoming anthology

COLORS OF EXPRESSION

To be held at A Room of Our Own Bookstore (444 9th Street, Brooklyn) November 7 at 7 P.M. Submissions still being accepted for this unique, creative work of men and women of color who are living with AIDS. The theme for works of poetry, prose and art slated to appear is "Living Our Lives Day to Day." For more information about submitting work, please call (718) 499-6937.

THEATER

The Atlanta Ballet presents

Planet Dance

Guest Artists: Albert Evans and Wendy Whelan, NY City Ballet; For tickets call (404) 875-9081.

December 7–9, and 14–16—Comfort Zone Productions presents

The Best of Love Letters

by Kimbley Gilchrist and

PIPE DREAMS

and

The Christian and the Jewess

by Ira L. Jeffries, Starring Cheryl L. McClendon and Judi Smith. A series of one-act plays exploring various issues including women and AIDS, opposing viewpoints on religion and sexuality, women and war, drugs and rekindling old flames. Shows at Amuse America, 599 Broadway at Houston. Tickets: $12 in advance, $15 at the door. For information and reservations, call 212-726-1322 or 718-802-9037.

November 22 —December 10—7 Stages Theatre, in Little Five Points, 1105 Euclid Ave. presents

RIFFS

by Bill Harris. A special show to benefit AIDS Education/Services for Minorities will be held Sunday, Dec. 10. Call (404) 753-2900 for tickets/information this showing only.

A hilarious and charming story of four older African-American men who meet daily to read the newspaper, lie, and signify. In a play that combines humor, history, and hope, the retired men of the North End Preservation Association tell stories that reveal the importance and the richness of the African-American experience in the 20th Century. For tickets (404) 522-0911.

November 17–November 19—

EL CIMARRON

at 7 Stages Theatre features baritone Andre Solomon-Glover in the compelling story of Esteban Montejo, who was born a Cuban slave and escaped to his freedom. Tickets, call (404) 522-0911.

The Whole World Theatre presents

Improv Comedy

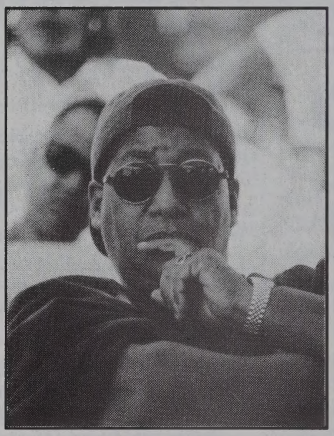
every Thursday night in our groovy, couch and easy chair "in your living room" environment. Guaranteed to be risky, risque and right up your alley if you liked Pulp Fiction. 9 PM. 1214 Spring Street, Atlanta. $5. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

The Whole World Theatre presents

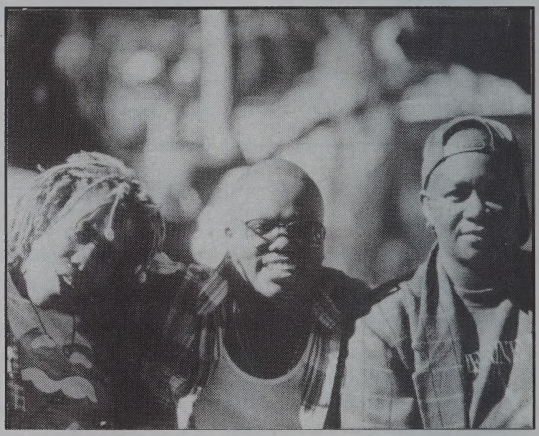
Pimps, Queens, & Dope Fiends Christmas Special

every Friday and Saturday night beginning November 10 through December 23. It's a sexy X-Mas filled with merriment... and miracles. 9 PM 1214 Spring Street. $10. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

OUT & about



Writer Margret Sloan-Hunter, author of Black & Lavendar, *at Uloah Sister Fest.*

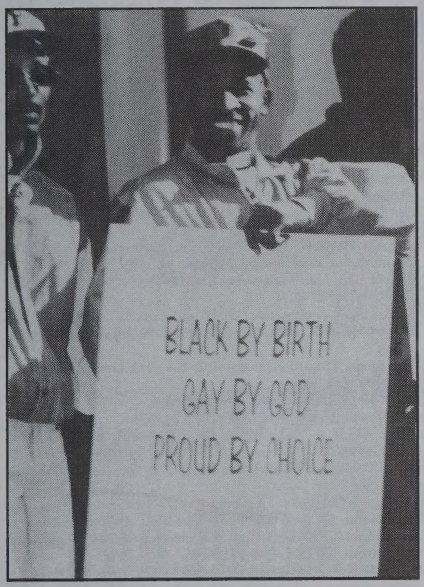


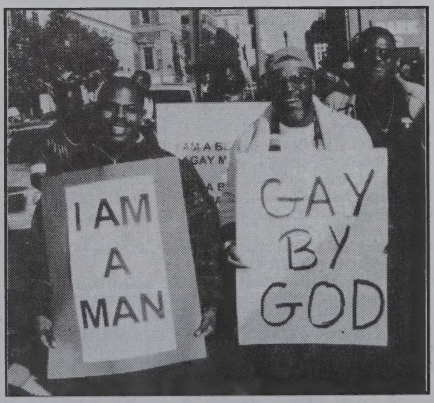
(Left to Right) Jeanine Woodson, Glinda Smith, and Sharon Noble (author of Lesbian Bedtime Stories), all from California.

Michael-Tone Covington, Tony Daniels and Tre Johnson (l–r) at the Venus headquarters during a poetry-reading fundraiser.

Linda Harrison, GA State Univ. Law Professor, and her partner, Joan Garner, executive director of The Fund for Southern Communities, during the Stonewall Bar Assoc.'s 1st Annual Awards Banquet last month

1,000,000 African-American Men Marching on D.C. × 10% =





ALL PHOTOGRAPHY THIS PAGE BY RON SINGLETON

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Creation Woman—poets/artists and affiliates meet last Sunday in the month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlatna, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

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SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

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Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

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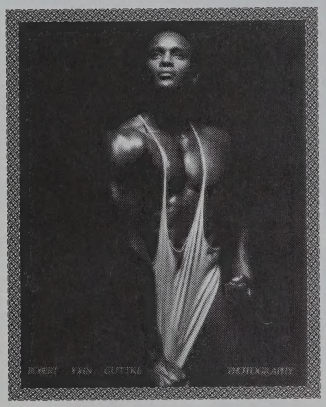

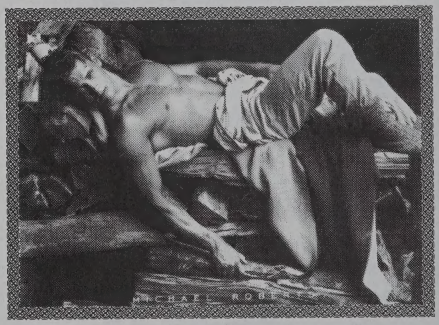

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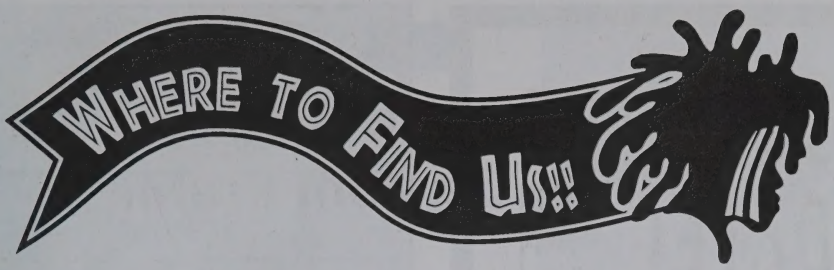

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October 1995
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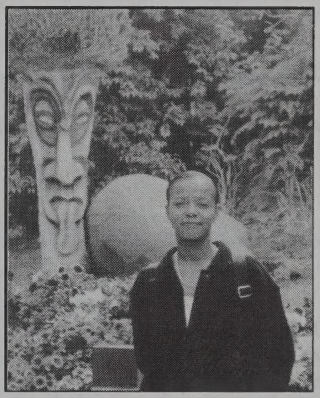
Climbing the wall in China.



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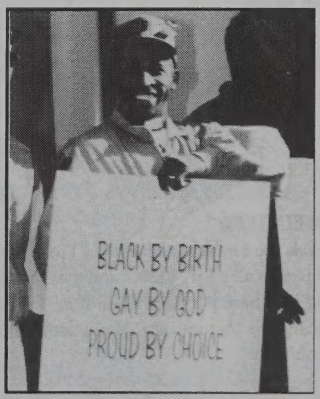


Crashing the Million Man March with our own 10% Club.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

L E T T E R S

DEAR EDITOR,

Thanks for creating a voice in Atlanta. I look forward to reading your publication. However, I have one concern. I am a middle-aged person (44) and find it difficult to find articles, books etc. relating to persons in my age group. It would be interesting to read an articles periodically, focusing on older or mature persons. Think about it.

Once again, thank you.

DEAR EDITOR:

Horahee! Just a note to congratulate you on a professional, informative, down-to-earth publication. This is only a beginning!

Charles B. Tarver
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing first to commend you and your staff for printing such a fine and informative publication. "Venus" is definitely a newsworthy magazine, and I pray that it's distribution will be more widespread in the near future.

Linus Lynell
Dallas, TX

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for Venus Magazine! I love it!! I have shared it with all of my friends and they also enjoyed reading it. There is NOTHING here for African-American gays and lesbians. We're looking forward to the next one!

Waletta Scott
Las Vegas, NV

DEAR EDITOR,

You may be surprised to learn exactly how remarkably reknowned Venus Magazine is. Your "Where to Find Us" page doesn't do you justice.

Venus has transcended the orderly world of free society and miraculously been found inside the gay prison society.

You've proved to be an entertaining, intelligent and informative companion. Thank you for reducing the isolation of my imprisonment.

Vernon Beal
Jefferson City, MO

DEAR EDITOR:

I picked up Venus Magazine at the Visitor's Bureau at Underground. A nice lady handed it to me when I inquired about gay and lesbian Atlanta. Keep up the good work. We need you!

Viola
Brooklyn, NY

DEAR EDITOR,

Alright!, Alright, Alright!!!

I happened to stumble across a copy of your magazine at the recently held First Annual Out-Charlotte Festival. Enclosed is my subscription. I look forward to reading the entire magazine. And if there is any way I can help out please feel free to let me know! Great job! It does my heart good and I look forward to hearing from you!!

C. David Wingate
Asheville, NC

P.S.: You have the beginnings of something phenomenal—Hang in there!!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name:..... Yvonne "Evee" Smith Adams

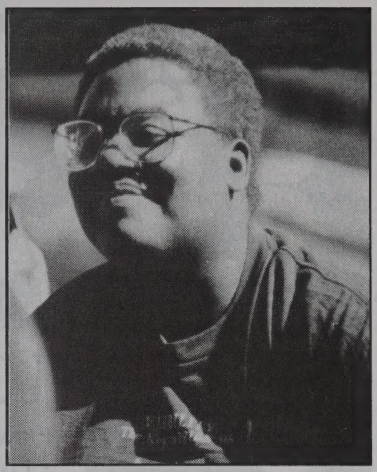
Age:..... 41

Status:..... To Be Arranged

Career: ..... College Advisor/Instructor

Hometown:.. Washington, D.C.

Latest Book:. "Hunter" by Margaret Sloan



As an advisor at Oregan State University, Evee's motto is "I am who I am, I have the right to go wherever I want. I'm responsible for my own joy and happiness in life."

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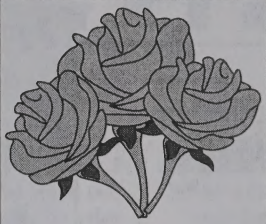

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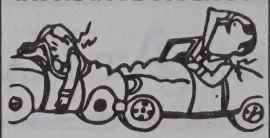

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Traveling to China: A Spiritual Journey

By Wanda Alston

Lately, I have been asked if I considered myself black first or a woman first. Some Black women may say that I am Black first. For me, I am a woman first because of the household I grew up in with eight males and five females. Growing up, my parents have never addressed me as a "black person." A number of references were made to my gender and the limitations that went with being a girl. I felt oppressed as a girl before I ever stepped outside my door into the world of sexism, racism classism, homophobia..

PHOTO COURTESY WANDA ALSTON

At the U.N. Conference on Women's Issues, Wanda Alston (l), Zachie Achmat from South Africa (c), and Valleria Wagner (r), NBGLLF co-chair.

I went to China wondering how I was going to find the niche that would let me know why I was there. I found that niche immediately as a feminist. I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did. I was a U.S.. citizen from North America. This is very different from being a citizen of South America or Central America. I was given a class distinction that I had not experienced in the U.S. As a result, I was faced with some issues that I was not ready to deal with.

The aspect of "class" that I was forced to deal with was not about being poor, middle class or rich. My class distinction was about freedom to express your ideas and thoughts and the opportunity to lift yourself from poverty and physical abuse.

This distinction was particularly clear when I spoke with and observed the women of China. In this communist country, women are treated with less respect than men. They also have very little say so when it comes to education and exchange of ideas and art. These distinctions were also true in many other countries as well.

During the conference, I had an excellent opportunity to network with women from a number of different fields. Patricia Ireland, President of NOW (National Organization for Women), and I co-led a delega-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

tion of thirty NOW members. The group was part of a larger U.S. delegation of 500 women and about 50 Chinese women as part of a U.S.-China Joint Conference on Women's issues in Beijing. Each organization had delegates who were invited to share their professional and organizational experiences. Many of the participants were from the fields of science, technology, medicine, sports and business.

The two day work session was very diverse and covered topics including: violence against women, achieving justice for women, and careers in engineering, etc.

One of the prevailing factors that all the women agreed upon was the fact that a glass ceiling does exist in China as well as the U.S. Women are only able to advance to a certain point on the employment ladder. Beyond that point, males hold the high paying prestigious jobs.

This was discussed in a workshop I attended concerning the women of China. Ninety-five percent of the top management positions in China are held by men with women holding only 5 of those positions. One reason for this is the mandatory retirement of women when they reach the age of 55. The women are then responsible for caring for the elderly.

The first week of my trip was full of cultural site seeing. I was able to visit the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven. These sites were an integral part of understanding the Chinese people and their culture.

We traveled throughout the city in 17 buses and ate our meals at the most exquisite restaurants in Beijing. The people of China had no problem feeding 500 people in one sitting. We would arrive at a restaurant, sit down and begin eating all at the same time. The average Chinese meal is approximately ten courses. Meals included a variety of foods including: vegetables, rice, fish, beef and chicken. The food was delicious. I must say, however, that by the time I returned to the U.S., I was glad not to eat Chinese food for a while.

There were a number of correlations between the Chinese women and the U.S. women. There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "women hold up half the sky." This statement was made during the cultural revolution by Mao. The statement refers to the need for the involvement of women if economic and political change is to take place. Women must be a part of the planning and decision making regarding country and governmental affairs at every level. In addition, if any governmental affairs at every level in addition, if any change is to take place in discrimination and human rights violations of women and children, we must unite with women whose culture and ideas may be like ours and find a common ground to bring about equality, development and peace.

I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did.

The theme of the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Forum was "Equality, Development and Peace." My most memorable moment came at the opening ceremonies of the NGO Forum which took place on August 30, 1995 at the Olympic stadium. The event alone was spectacular. There was a feeling of unity and love from the crowd of 10,000 people from around the world. The people of China did a wonderful job of entertaining the global audience of the many women from 180 countries. They had participants from around China including men, women and children, old and very young.

The passing of the torch was a wonderful part of the opening ceremonies. Women from every country represented at the World Conference on Women passed the torch of equality, development and peace. This served not only to open the ceremony but to symbolize the uniting to discuss all issues of the past decade and into the next millennium. During the passing of the torch, everyone sang "Keep on Moving Forward." This was a very emotional scene which brought many to tears. The ceremony left me with a sense of joy and hope for the world.

The next day, the NGO began outside of Northeast Beijing in Huairou County.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Approximately 30,000 people from 180 countries participated. The first day, it rained and the global tent was filled with women trying to get program books, information and ponchos to help them stay dry. The small group of three women that I traveled with headed to the makeshift McDonald's for lunch. Yes, they did have a McDonald's. Some groups actually protested the presence of the fast food chain.

I wanted to participate in the NGO forum because of the lack of discussion of lesbian issues that had not been brought into the mainstream of the Platform of Action. The Platform included those actions that governments should take to eliminate poverty, violence against women, reproductive rights, health and many other issues. What was not included in the Platform of Action was sexual orientation. Sexuality, as it related to lesbianism and discrimination, was kept to a minimum. Representatives from South Africa were the most outspoken regarding this issue. The country has sexual orientation in their national constitution.

The final most remarkable experience I had going to China was the fact that all my life, I knew that people of color were the largest group in the world. That fact became very clear when I went to the NGO forum. I noticed that the majority of the women looked like me. This gave me some hope as I aspire to empower my sisters in the U.S.

I learned a great deal about myself during my travel to China. I met a woman who saved for five years to attend the conference. She sold straw baskets that she made. Here I thought that working the last few months to secure my way was a feat.

My journey was a spiritual one. It began months, years and decades before I consciously realized that I would be traveling to China. I have always wanted to travel to China. I feel spiritually connected to China, as I do Africa. This journey proved to be the beginning of many trips I will take outside the U.S. I use such journeys to discover and understand my blackness, lesbianism and my feminism. During my travels, I am able to explore want it is like to struggle in a movement where black women are still politically and economically invisible.

Wanda Alston is an activist from the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and N.O.W.

Where do you worship & why?

PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Tony Daniels with Unity Founder, Bishop Carl Bean.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church is where I worship. This church is the one place that I've found that welcomes me as I am; a Black Gay Man, activist, writer, performer, living with AIDS. We embrace people from all walks of life, regardless of sexual orientation, race, sex, creed, or gender. The church's motto is "God is Love and Love is for Everyone." We make that clear every Sunday. I am an officer of the church (Deacon in Training), this affords me a lot of contact with the congregation. I know first hand the good we are doing in the name of the Lord God who is in each and everyone of us. The emphasis is placed on spirituality as opposed to the literal interpretation of written scriptures.

Tony Daniels, 1995

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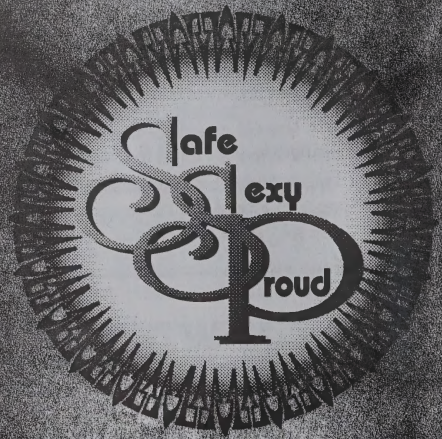

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Project Open Hand: Meals for Life

Project Open Hand is a non-profit organization which provides two freshly prepared meals a day, seven days a week to people who are living with AIDS in Atlanta. There is no charge to the recipients for the meals. Project Open Hand currently delivers to around 500 clients (1000 meals) per day. Approximately fifty new clients are added each month.

Project Open Hand works with a nutritionist to plan appropriate diets for people living with AIDS and HIV-related illnesses. The Project attempts to meet the varied needs of all of its clients by serving, in addition to regular meals, vegetarian, bland, no dairy, no salt, no pork, no red meat, no fish, soft meals, diabetic, and liquid meals.

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of health care for a person with AIDS. The progression of HIV infection can be accelerated or intensified by nutritional deficiencies. It is imperative that people with AIDS have proper nutrition in order to try to maintain a stronger immune system. A large number of these people have neither the strength nor the energy to shop for ingredients or to prepare the meals. Frequently, people are devastated financially by the disease, and they do not have the resources to obtain nutritious food.

Project Open Hand pioneered a system of delivering meals cold, at close to freezing temperatures. Many meal delivery services deliver meals hot, requiring the food to be kept in warmers for long periods. Keeping the food warm can increase the risk of bacterial growth—an extreme hazard for immune-suppressed individuals. The Project serves meals in special packaging so that clients may use microwaves to heat the meals. Project Open Hand provides donated microwaves to clients who cannot obtain their own.

Project Open Hand began in 1988 with only fourteen clients, operating out of the kitchen of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. The Project has now served around two million meals. Project Open Hand relies heavily on volunteers for all aspects of its operation. Volunteers prepare, pack, and deliver meals to clients, work in the office, and assist in fundraisers and other community events.

In 1991, Project Open Hand moved to its current operating site at the old Bass High School in Little Five Points. The Project shares the kitchen there with the staff of Mary Lin Elementary School, which is using the building until renovations are completed on their own building. Project Open Hand is actively negotiating for a new facility for its operations.

Project Open Hand's annual $2.5 million operating expenses are funded through grants, private donations, fundraising events, and corporate giving.

Atlanta is a city which traditionally reaches out to its citizens who are in need and embraces their diversity. Project Open Hand continues to rediscover the "heart" of Atlanta and its people in the outpouring of help from its volunteers and supporters.

Project Open Hand is in need of volunteers in all areas of its operations, day and evening. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities may call (404) 525-4620.

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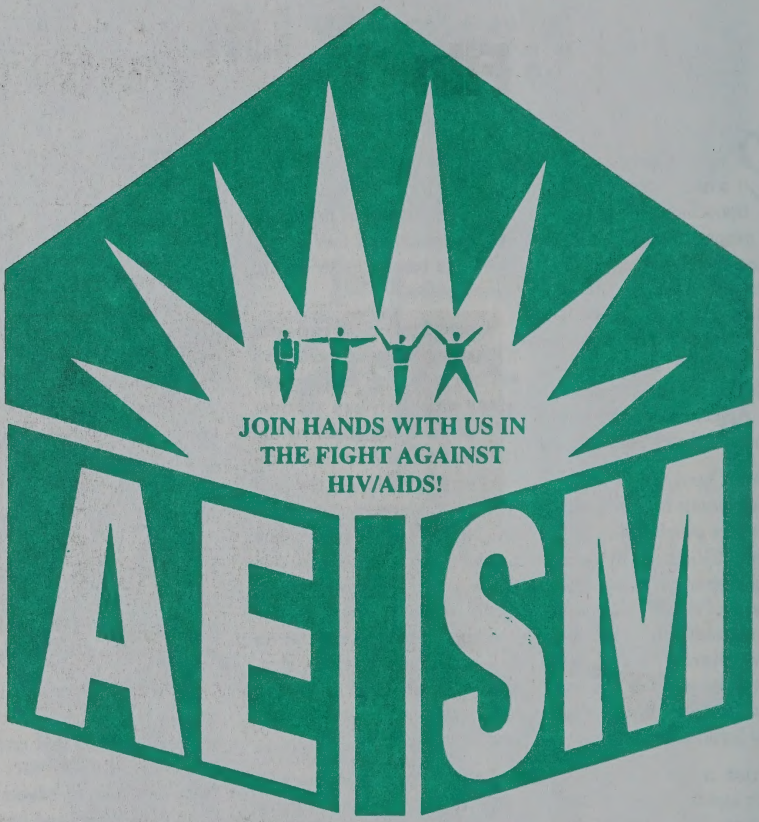
In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.



Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

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Black Nations/Queer Nations?
MIX 95: Film/Video Festival

MIX 95: Ninth New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival—the largest avant garde film festival in the world and oldest queer festival in New York City—is bringing more than 200 queer experimental films, videos, and cybermedia from around the world to three venues in New York.

The festival will feature the long-awaited feature film debut by Thomas Allen Harris, "Vintage * Families of Value," an experimental documentary about black gay siblings. The Festival will close with the World Premiere of "Black Nations/ Queer Nations?" an experimental documentary directed by Shari Frilot about the historic conference by the same name which addressed lesbian and gay sexualities in the African Diaspora. MIX 95 will also feature "Jungli Boogie," a queer and South Asian groovin' production.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYLE ASTON HARRIS

Isaac Julien and Kabena Mercer at "Black Nations/Queer Nations?"

Other festival highlights include CYBERTOPIA: Mapping Queer Spaces, an installation of interactive media works and queer digital media.

Free Speech TV (Nov. 4-17) four hours of the best of MIX 95 in a cable access program which will be broadcast daily in more than 50 cities across America, and and MIX BRASIL: 3rd Festival das Manifestacoes da Sexualidade, the only traveling lesbian and gay festival in South America. With the support of MTV Brasil, the Banco Nacional in Sao Paulo and the Sao Paulo state.

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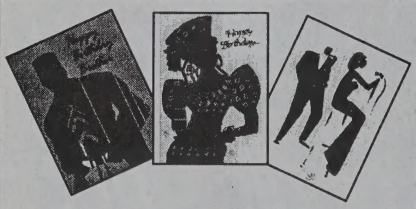

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Indecent Proposal

A Twist on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

By Rosalind Christine Lloyd

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been a popular topic in the media because it plays almost like a soap opera in that it reeks of scandal and controversy. It is an important topic as current events uniquely chronicles the ever-slowly changing role of women in the workplace. One only has to examine the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings and Senator Packwood case as points of reference to this fact. However, sexual harassment of and in the Gay and Lesbian community is a subject that lies deep in the heart of America's crowded closet. As our ranks become more visible, it was only a matter of time vefore we began to witness an increase in negative sociological issues that plague the heterosexual community beginning to infiltrate the homosexual community. For example, racism and sexism are alive and well in the Gay and Lesbian community, even in these so-called progressive "Gay Nineties."

We have been affected by sexual harassment, by and large, by

Author Rosalind Christine Lloyd

individuals that somehow consider themselves members of the heterosexual community. I know this to be true on a personal note as I have experienced this form of harassment first-hand. My twelve lesbian years did not prepare me for what I encountered and the experience managed to leave a lasting impression with serious scars that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

It was a complex situation crossing the lines of gender, sexual and racial politics all at once. For several years I worked for a prominent and very successful organization where I was "out" on the job. Although I didn't wear my sexual identity on my sleeve, my orientation was a well-known fact among my colleagues and I was accepted as a lesbian without issue.

When a highly qualified, well-connected African-American woman came to head our office as Director, I was empowered to know that the organization had the decency, initiative, and foresight to promote a sister as a Director to the Board of Trustees where women and African Americans were typically rare. It was a progressive step for the administration. Denise was Ivy league educated, came from a near wealthy family, she married into a wealthy, near prestigious family, boasted an impressive background, spoke French like only a dignified French woman could and had the chic-est fashion sense known to woman-kind. This sister was eager for any challenge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Denise and I developed an excellent working relationship as Director and assistant, mentor and protégé, and friends. Our association was driven by pride and mutual respect. To be on her team motivated me—it was my number one objective to ensure that our office produce high quality product and to reinforce the company's commitment to hiring talented African-Americans, Women and Gays and Lesbians into higher positions of authority. I would no longer allow the infamous glass ceiling to influence my desire to elevate. She inspired me to further my education, to reach higher than I thought possible, constantly reminding me of how bright and talented I am. With her support and encouragement, I became an important player in the scheme of things as they pertained to our office. My involvement in critical projects, presentations, and my participation in international conferences will always remain as important experiences I will never forget; Denise made it possible.

At first, I considered her overt interest in me as mere curiosity, which we all know will happen at times when certain heterosexual women learn that certain women are lesbians. Suddenly the wind shifts, the tides change, things just aren't the same anymore. You either become the receptacle of all her feminine desire or you become the gay representative of information on all things remotely related to Gay and Lesbian issues. This is not the most desirable position to be in.

It started out with the endless compliments and verbal adorations. Expensive dinners at pricey, upscale restaurants were common, where we ate quite well and the company paid for every bit of it. Gifts of foreign chocolates, antique jewelry of questionable value, French perfume, random pieces of designer clothing, unlimited use of her credit card for no apparent reason other that the fact that she was purely being nice to me. All of this resulted into a dangerous, unrequited obsession. An objective observer would initially view our tightness as a mentor-protégé relationship. However, if one were to take a closer look and peel off the layers of ambiguity and professional protocol, one could easily see a smoldering yet subtley restrained innuendo.

The innuendo soon escalated to advances; Denise finding excuses to touch my face, reasons to run her fingers along my hair, giving me unsolicited back rubs while telling me how beautiful she thinks I am. The "come with me to the ladies room," conversations about her husband and/or my lover were curious. The business trip to the Far East where she convinced me that it was safer we share a room with double beds, only to discover once we arrived that a king-sized bed was to be our shared sleeping accommodations!

I was in denial over what was happening. My lover at the time, insisted that something was going on and that I was deliberately overlooking it. I believed that my lover was simply being overprotective and possessive, a textbook case of co-dependency. Obviously at great risk, our relationship suffered irreparable damage from the ordeal.

One evening, Denise and I worked in the office until about 11:00 PM. We ordered dinner in and labored until we were brain-fatigued. She asked me if she could stay the night at my place; her apartment in the city was being occupied by friends of her family and she didn't feel like making the long trek upstate to her other home. I was fine with this, although I couldn't understand why a woman with two homes would want to sleep in my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

cramped studio apartment in one of the city's marginal neighborhoods. But, we were involved in an important project and I lived close to the office. It was terribly convenient.

After my shower, she was already in my bed. As I stood nearby setting the alarm clock, she asked me how could I wear such a tight t-shirt to bed. It was simply a sleeveless tee, typical sleep wear. Ignoring the comment, I climbed into bed next to her and lay silent for a few moments. After about ten minutes of silence, she asked me,

"When are we going to do it?"

It was so matter of fact, almost like it had been on the tip of her tongue all night.

I asked her to repeat what she had said because I was caught completely off guard, shocked and unprepared.

She said it again, "You heard me, when are we going to do it?"

I responded, "What about my lover and your husband?"

Denise whispered it harshly, "They don't have to know."

"But aren't you my boss and I'm your employee?" I had to confirm this fact with her.

"So? No one has to know, except you and me."

The reality shattered me. To say I was devastated would be a gross understatement simply because of what she initially represented to me. There it was, in my face, in my bed. I turned my back on her. The tension in that room was unbearable.

Everything changed. She was a woman not accustomed to the word "no" and her anger and feelings of rejection would reverberate throughout the duration of our acquaintance.

There was a drastic decrease in our close interaction. Although we tried to maintain a civility toward each other, now there was a great deal of stress between us.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent.... There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

Confused, disappointed, slightly flattered, I was feeling so many different conflicting things, but ultimately I felt manipulated and deceived.

She was a different person. My participation in conferences and projects were reduced. My requests for time off were frequently denied. My performance review was postponed indefinitely and she made it clear that a pay raise was not in my future. My work was being closely monitored and scrutinized to the point where we would have loud arguments in the office, even in front of co-workers. On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women only validated my denial and ignorance to the truth. Finally after one bitter disagreement I decided it was impossible for she and I to peacefully coexist together. I resigned from the best job I ever had.

For me, issues of empowerment among and for the African-American, Women, and Gay & Lesbian communities are essentially important being that I am a critical part of each of these groups. Within these groups, the African-American lesbian is at the bottom of each list, the least important, the most discriminated against and largely the most ignored. Due to this bitter piece of reality, I approach everyday life with these three common denominators in mind, and for these reasons I could not consciously persecute the already persecuted. The wide range of repercussions would be too deep. Although this harassment experience exploited everything that I am and represent, I had to take it to another level, of how the closet (someone else's) still destroyed my career and an important part of my life.

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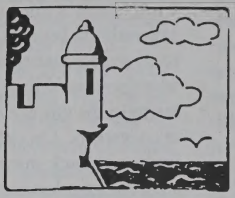

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Litany for Survival—
The Life &Work of Audre Lorde

Michelle Parkerson, filmmaker, on her involvement in this ground breaking work.

Producer/Director of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, Ada Gay-Griffin first met Lorde in 1978 while studying black feminist literature and theory at Hampshire College. Griffin has helped introduce the work of outstanding filmmakers of color to audiences in the U.S. Griffin has also spoken and written on media literacy and empowerment. *A Litany for Survival* is her first film, completed after 10 years of struggle to release this first film to link black, gay and women's rights.

Griffin invited Director **Michelle Parkerson**, a writer and independent filmmaker from Washington, D.C. to work on *Litany* eight years ago. She has served on the faculties of Temple University, the University of Delaware, Howard University and Northwestern University. In 1992, she received a Rockefeller Foundation Film/Video Fellowship. As a member of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women (8th Cycle), she wrote and directed "Odds and Ends," a black amazon science fiction story.

A Litany for Survival is an epic portrait of the eloquent, award-winning black lesbian poet, whose writing articulated some of the most important social and political visions of this century. Lorde, a controversial and celebrated African-American writer, cultural theorist and activist, embodied the connections among three dynamic social movements: the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. From Lorde's childhood in New York City's Harlem to her vibrant poetry and prose, from her battle against breast cancer to her forceful workshops and speeches, this powerful film explores her remarkable life.

Emory University's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life and ZAMI (Atlanta's group for African-American lesbians), in conjunction with the Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Project will present the Atlanta premiere of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lord* November 18 at 4 and 8 PM in Harland Cinema (located in the Dobbs University Center on Emory's Campus). Griffin and Parkerson will host a discussion/question and answer session following the viewing. This event is open to the public. Students and seniors will be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Audre Lord and her daughter.

admitted for $5, others for $10, payable at the door only.

Venus magazine profiled Parkerson to solicit her views on a myriad of concerns as a film executive, from challenges as a black gay woman to the impact of Lorde's works on her endeavors.

Venus Magazine: How did the vision for the film take place, and how did you go about facilitating that vision?

Michelle Parkerson: Basically my role in the project was to facilitate Ada's (Gay-Griffin, producer/director of the film) vision.

What this meant was the project was a collaborative effort on behalf of Ada, Audre Lorde, and myself. Audre was heavily involved in commenting on the footage, and the people we were to interview, giving us information for contacts and biography, as well as people to discuss and critique her work. It was firstly Ada's work and I was there, more or less, as a facilitator. Simply making sure the work makes it to the screen; I was the generator of the vision.

We wanted to present a film with Black Lesbians as the primary group or focus, to act as a document of Audre's present, not her past. Not a memorial. It would have been much easier to do something more celebratory that did not address some of the issues of Audre's works and life, including some of the contradictions. It would have not taken eight years to do something that was simply praising her work. We wanted something much more complex than that, because her work was so complex, and the film needed to represent the challenge that her work put out in the community-at-large. It was important to us that the film further her work in terms of

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Michelle Parkerson, Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

awareness, as well as involve people in work with women with cancer, being a survivor of cancer, and how one does that. We needed to also look at Audre's role in the international movement of people of color, and how we can all be a part of that. We were concerned with much more than making a film that was entertaining on a cinematic level. This film had work to do, to act as a catalyst to motivate people to do the necessary work wherever they find themselves.

We also had an eye towards a group of people who may not know, or even care, who Audre Lorde is, or what her work reflects. We also had the task of drawing them in and keeping them interested, and import Audre's work internationally. Import in terms of the Gay and Lesbian community, import as far as feminism is concerned, import as far as feminist literature is concerned, and as far as American literature is concerned. There were a lot of levels that we were working to satisfy, to come up with a structure that would reach out, address, inform and touch people.

Venus: What central message do you have for young, black, gay/lesbian filmmakers attempting to mobilize their community?

Parkerson: The hope is that there exists now generations of Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers who are out and have been impacted by the works of those who have paved the way; Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Slyvia Rue, Joycelyn Taylor, Cheryl Dunae, Brent Hill, John Suggs, and Jamika Aljalan just to name a few. There are also their film and video works that one can study and see how to take an approach towards media and their sexuality as well as their race. In the mid 80's there arose a very visible group of sisters who were out with the material they were producing, letting the fact that they were Black Lesbians inform and shape the work as well. It was not peripheral to the material, it was not just about them.

For black people to have access to the media, still remains rare for Black people, in terms of controlling and shaping the images and utilizing the technology, it remains even rarer for Black women and especially Black Lesbian women. Black Gay and Lesbian film and video makers are showing the reality of how we love and struggle, have tensions, and make great achievements and how the translation comes across on the screen for brothers and sisters. It is very important that Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers are making Black Gay and Lesbian films.

Venus: In your opinion, why have our society's mature black lesbians and gay men chosen to remain invisible when they are needed as positive role models?

Parkerson: I think its where you are . It is a possibility that it's geographic. In Washington

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

(D.C.) the Black Gay and Lesbian presence here has certainly been very viable and visible in city and municipal politics. We don't sit still for discrimination in this city. We have a level of protection because of that visibility; housing discrimination, employment discrimination, and social injustice get front page coverage, because we speak up and out against it.

It is phenomenal what is happening in the south and Atlanta. In the city you have the anonymity or the numbers of people to join in the community, and that is not the case in rural areas. The larger cities have larger gay and lesbian communities; New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., etc., as well as larger Black Gay and Lesbian communities. I think there is a certain conservatism that is pervasive the further south you get, almost as if the underlying consciousness is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I say that coming from a small southern town myself (Washington D.C.). We happen to have the focus of the nation in the sense of the world's attention here because of the government. Outside of the federal city, it is a small southern town, but there is a level of cosmopolitanism, and bodasciousness, a lack of not caring, which is a southern thing, about what people think and making it anyway. A large piece of southerner's care and comfort level in the community seems to be based upon other people's perception of us. Atlanta is coming, but there still exists this conservative atmosphere, and I'm wondering who that's for. Here (D.C.) and in Baltimore, and its a small southern town too, people have let it go. Baltimore may not be as cosmopolitan but it is progressive. That same vibration is present in Atlanta and growing. It happens whenever we acknowledge each other, when we start doing thing outside of the bars. Doing things that are empowering. Forming consciousness raising groups, things like Lesbians over 30-something, social and political action groups. Those kinds of things further our presence and empower each one of us to look into each other eyes. We can then look at things differently and say "Yeah, this is O.K.," "She's living fine, I'm doing O.K.," "How can I pass this on." These acts are very affirming. Venus Magazine is a part of that, it's a part of the affirmation and the rush towards progression and visibility. Thank god! you are down here.

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Ada Gay Griffin, Producer/ Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

The Lady in the Jewel Box—a film produced in 1987 was about the only woman to perform with the world famous Jewel Box Review, which was a troupe of female impersonators. The film was made for more reasons than the obvious. We wanted to preserve the history of the Jewel Box Theatre. It toured the Black theatre circuit and was the first integrated female impersonation show in the 50's and 60's. The show played across the country, to all sexual orientations, to black audiences that looked forward to seeing the show every year. The show had so much talent, there was no lip synching, they performed live, they had fabulous costumes, and the entertainers were beautiful. Their repertoire include the divas of the era; Dinah Washington, Lena Horne, and Billie Holiday, and they sang and danced to no end.

Mabel Hampton is another example of an old-school Black out Lesbian whose work was documented in the lesbian herstory archives. She has often been honored at national conferences by Black Gays and Lesbians.

There is a history of elders in our community that have struggled as we still struggle today. They dealt with tremendous pressures and invisibility. These examples tend to put into perspective your own personal ideas of how you're going to define your role as an African American and as Gay or Lesbian. It makes you that much more in tune to the realities of what you can and cannot do, and when it is appropriate to break barriers, and how one does that and survives. It brings it all together. It is important that we document the lives of our elders, its not all about the 20-something generation and what's happening now. There are people we need to look back on and that has always fortified us. Particularly as African people. When we look back at the legacy of people, and it will certainly fortify us as lesbians and gay people. When we can look at our own race and know James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Mabel Hampton, and Bayard Rustin were great black gay Americans.

About Audre Lorde

February 18, 1934–November 17, 1992

Audre Lorde is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Her writing has been translated in seven foreign languages.

Born the youngest of three daughters and raised in a West Indian household in Harlem, Audre Lorde began reading and reciting poetry at a very young age. She often used poetry to communicate with others. When she could no longer find poems to express her feelings, she began writing her own poetry. Her first published poem appeared in *Seventeen* magazine while she was a student at Hunter High School. Audre Lorde later attended Hunter College in New York City where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1959. She regularly attended and read with the Harlem Writer's Guild, and cited Langston Hughes and John Henrick Clarke as early mentors. She received a masters degree in Library Science from Columbia University in 1961 and worked as a librarian at Mount Vernon Public Library until 1963. She was head librarian at Town School Library in New York City from 1966 to 1968.

In 1968, Audre Lorde became poet in residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and published her first volume of poetry, *The First Cities*. Lorde's third volume of poetry, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, published by Broadside Press (Detroit) in 1973, was nominated for a National Book Award. *Coal*, published in 1976 by W.W. Norton and Company, was the first of Lorde's books to be released by a major publisher. A compilation of her first two books, it brought her work to a broader readership. W.W. Norton published five of her six subsequent volumes of poetry, collections which chart the development of her complex poetic and personal vision.

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, Lorde's writings about her illness were published in *The Cancer Journals* which won the American Library Association Gay Caucus Book of the Year Award for 1981. Other prose included a biographical novel, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1982), and *A Burst of Light* (1986) in which Lorde, again diagnosed with cancer, returned to prose to help heal herself and inspire others. Audre Lorde's final volume of poetry, *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Disease* (1993) was published posthumously.

Audre Lorde worked intensively with women of color in many different countries, was a founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, a founding mother of Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, and addressed two national marches: the 1983 20th Anniversary Commemorative March on Washington for Justice, Peace and Equality; and the First National March for Lesbian and Gay Liberation in 1979, also in Washington, D.C.

Audre Lorde was awarded the Walt Whitman Citation for Merit for poets and was named state poet of New York for 1991–1993. And she received honorary doctorate degrees from Oberlin College (1989) and Haverford College (1990). She retired to the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1987, continuing to work until her death in 1992.

Essex Charles Hemphill

April 16, 1957–November 4, 1995

Essex Charles Hemphill, poet, editor, was born in Chicago on April 16, 1957. He was raised in Washington, D.C. and as a youngster began perfecting the art of writing prolific, often controversial poetry about his life as a Black, gay man in America.

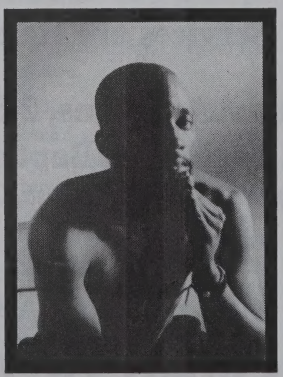
He founded **Nethula Journal of Contemporary Literature** in 1978. He ran the magazine several years before becoming more and more active as a performer. In 1983 he formed **Cinque**, a trio of performance artists.

Essex received Fellowship in Literature from the D.C. Commission for the Arts (1982, 1983, and 1988). He is the recipient of a 1985 Fellowship in Literature (Poetry) from the national Endowment of the Arts. And co-recipient of a 1986 and 1987 Painted Bride Arts Center New Works Residency.

His work has been published in **Black Scholar, Essence Magazine, Callaloo, Painted Bride Quarterly, Gargoyle, Outweek, Blackheart, Obsidian, New York Native, James White Review, Hometowns, I Hear A Symphony** and, still, several other North American publications.

Selections of his poetry are anthologized in **Artists Against Apartheid, The Poet Upstairs, In the Life, New Men, New Minds and Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men**, which he also edited, earning him a Lambda Award.

His work in print includes three self-published chapbooks, **Diamonds was in the Kitty** (1982), **Plums** (1983), **Earth Life** (1985), and a book-length collection, **Conditions** (1986).



Author Essex Charles Hemphill died Nov. 4, 1995.

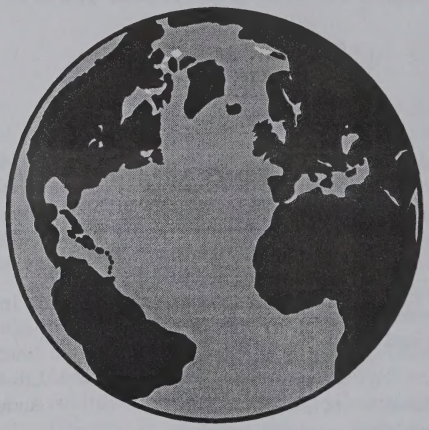
Mr. Hemphill's work is featured in the films **Lookin' for Langston, Tongues Untied** and **Black Is, Black Ain't** (director Marlon Riggs' last film..)

In 1992, his first book of poetry, **Ceremonies**, was published, earning him the National Library Association's New Authors in Poetry Award.

In 1993, he worked in Santa Monica, California, with the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, Visiting Scholars Program. 1994 saw hime in Philadelphia, fulfilling the requirements of his Pugh Fellowship Award. It was in Philadelphia where he died of complications associated with AIDS on November 4, 1995. Mr. Hemphill will be funeralized and buried in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his mother, Mantalene Clark Hemphill, three sisters and one brother, all younger. There are close friends and scores of admirers who will miss the dynamic element he brought to everyone's life through his words.

Redefined Faith
Unity Fellowship Church



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In The Spirit; In The Life!

There is a Balm—
The Black Church Leadership Conference

By Craig Washington

The Second Annual Black Church National Education and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS was held on May 22-24, 1995, at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. Religious leaders, scholars and community workers from all over the country gathered to pray, plan and implement outreach and ministry efforts. The Conference was produced by The Balm in Gilead, Inc., a secular organization which provides education and technical support for African-American religious institutions engaged in HIV/AIDS education, services and advocacy. Founder Pernessa Seele enjoined the support of the nation's leading black spiritual dignitaries to ensure full participation. Within the context of this epidemic, the Black church must resume its historical role and relevance to the community that needs it now more than ever. This Conference was a groundbreaking step toward this process of reclamation.

This interdenominational summit served as both an educational forum addressing theological doctrine and practice and as a bonafide revival meeting replete with prayer, singing and shouting, inspiring its attendants to continue the struggle with renewed courage. The list of facilitators included such luminaries as Rev. Rainey Cheeks (Inner Light Unity Fellowship), Phil Wilson (AIDS Project Los Angeles) and Atlanta's own Byllye Avery (National Black Woman's Health Project) and Dr. Barbara King (Hillside). This diverse mix of pastors, gay activists and educators brought forth a wide range of vision and expertise.

The opening ceremony included an African libation, an HIV-focused invocation and greetings from Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Woman) and Dorothy Triplett (Center for Disease Control). Following the commencement, a panel of PWAs shared their stories of adversity and triumph as long-term survivors of HIV and other challenges (incest, substance abuse, neglect). The second day opened with a responsive reading calling to "God of the gay and God of the straight...God of Us All...Grant that in this safe space the silence will be broken so that the healing of HIV and AIDS may begin."

The workshop plenary offered an impressive menu of topics such as "The Church Beyond Homophobia" and "The Sexual and Emotional Health of Black Women." The black theology workshop provided provocative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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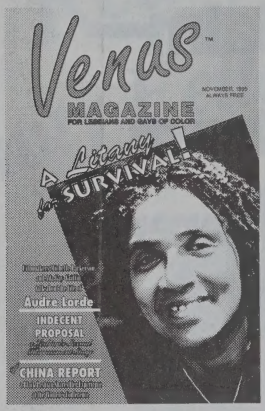

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insights regarding the Church's stance on sin and acceptance. Rev. Kelly Douglas stated that we must examine the black community in a historical context in order to understand how the Church "sees" and interprets God. In his address about homophobia, Dr. West underscored the Church's responsibility to grapple honestly with the sexual lives of his congregants. "Underneath our dresses and our three-piece suits we are all funky creatures," Dr. West attested, Author Haki Madhubuti facilitated a workshop entitled "The Sexual Responsibility of Black Men" and neglected to mention gay and bisexual issues. When challenged by the attendants, Madhubuti claimed to have insufficient knowledge of the subject. One of the participants cautioned, "You need to learn."

The final day began with a rousing rendition of "There is A Balm in Gilead" and offered a series of skill-building tracks. I attended the "HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Training for Ministers" delivered by Rev. Terri Griffen-Price (H.E.A.L.) and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones (Howard Univ). Thank you God for Rv. Price, a passionate speaker who got happy she advised us how to approach religious leaders. She advised us to challenge intolerant pastors and any theologies bereft of compassion. Dr. Farajaje-Jones addressed "erotophobia" (fear of the erotic and its power) and "gynophobia" (fear and hatred of women) as processes that fuel hostility towards gays and lesbians. The workshop offered methods of developing curricula to train leaders to respond to HIV/AIDS with compassion and competency.

I was deeply moved by the level of commitment among those in attendance. It was so refreshing to witness such exuberance despite the barriers which often thwart our work. I returned from this meeting feeling completely recharged, my wavering faith restored. I am happy to announce that several Atlantan spiritual leaders and activists are collaborating to organize a Week of Prayer during which churches and mosques would devote their energies to address HIV/AIDS in their congregations and community. Like the Harlem-based original event, the Week of Prayer can be celebrated through a gospel concert, ministry, bereavement service, revival, seminar or any activity motivated by a healing spirit. The Week of Prayer is tentatively scheduled for the first week of March 1996. Brothers and sisters in the life (closeted or not) need to take active roles in this event and the planning process has already begun. For more information,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

The Worship Service at the Second Annual Black Church National Educational and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS held May 22–24 at Howard University. (Top) New York's Marjorie Hill joins in, at right.

Redefining Our Faith

By Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee

The year is 1995 and African-American people who are "In The Life" are reclaiming an intricately heretical aspect of their culture— black church. After having collars and Bibles used to invalidate and oppress us, we can now use them as a source of freedom and liberation. We are finally moving toward the acceptance that God is love, and love is for everyone, regardless of race, creed, physical or financial ability, or sexual orientation.

There has never been any doubt about our existence or contribution to the black church, and we have done so and probably will continue to do so despite being denied the liberty to do so. The Unity Fellowship Church movement and Bishop Carl Bean have empowered those who have been robbed and stripped of family and community via the church.

Gail Booker, Tony Daniels, Michael-Tone Covington, Tamara Irons, and Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee (left to right), Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship members at the National Unity Convocation in Los Angeles.

No longer do we have to live in fear of going to hell for loving another human being. Freedom is here. No longer do we have to put aside being African-American to worship as les/bi/gay/trans people. For we now have a worship institution of our very own.

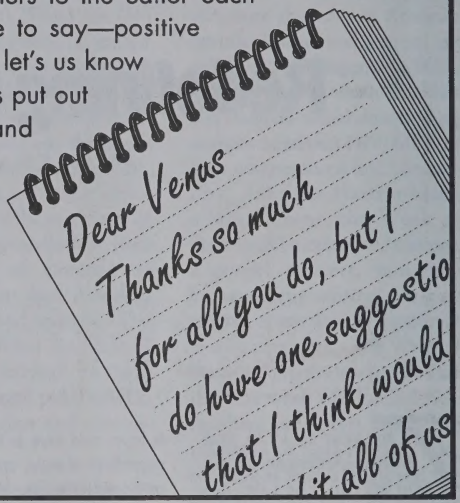
It's 1995, and Unity Fellowship Church is carrying its message of liberation theology to black gay people through its nine churches, in the United States.

It's 1995, and we now serve proudly and openly in church offices that we have always held.

It's 1995, and our people finally at last have the choice. Somebody, anybody say Amen.

We Love Hearing From You

Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



Keep Writing Those Letters

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Linus Lynell

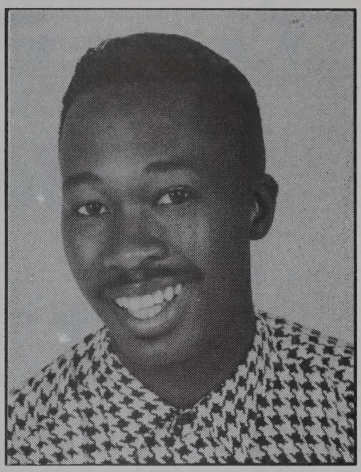
Age:..... 31

Status:..... Very single

Career:..... Non-profit administrator; Performing artist

Hometown:.. Flint, Michigan

Latest Book:. "Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America" by Nathan McCall



Linus is currently living in Dallas, Texas, and loves his work as Associate Coordinator for The Men's Gathering, a social support group for African-American men. He is also anspiring writer and will soon contribute articles about the black gay male experience in Dallas.

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Center Stage AT LAST!

Oleta Adams performs for HRCF

Songstress/Diva Oleta Adams.

Over 1,500 people turned out at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit for the Human Rights Campaign Fund's Michigan Dinner.

The black-tie event entitled "Center Stage at Last" could have just as easily been named "One Enchanted Evening."

The top two floors were reserved for a pre-event, the annual Women's Ice Breaker (very appropriately named). The third level hosted Washington V.I.P.'s and other dignitaries including Detroit's mayor, Dennis Archer.

Socialite June Washington, the women's outreach chair and African-American lesbian/Diva, is credited for the largest black gay and lesbian turnout at an HRCF event ever. (At $150–$300 per plate, that's some pretty fierce networking!)

Cheryl Troup, also a lesbian of color, served as Primary Event co-chair. Cheryl feels that the campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, is not only sincere by very serious about changing the stoic white male image traditionally associated with its annual events.

The evening began with a broadway style strolling dinner. When the lights finally dimmed, we found our seats and were dazzled by comedian Georgia Ragsdale. We roared with laughter as she talked about what it's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Commedienne Georgia Ragsdale.

like to visit a gay male bar. "BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! You can feel the music pounding six blocks away!"

Ragsdale might be the first out lesbian to hit network television with her own show, a sitcom series set to air this fall on ABC.

Her co-host, actor Dan Butler, of "Roseanne," "Picket Fences," and "X-Files" to name a few was equally entertaining; "I'm not a straight guy but I play one on T.V."

The highlight of the evening was a sizzling performance by two-time Grammy nominee Oleta Adams. She swooned us with all our favorites, including "Circle of One," "Get Here," "Hold Me for Awhile," and "Window of Hope."

Oleta says she identifies with singers like Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. "You can hear the purity of sound and emotion, but also the discipline, technique and sophistication. That's what my music is all about. Getting back to the part that's been left out since this synthetic, sterile, non-feeling sound has come in. Everyone wants to classify me, put me in a category. This is highly emotional music, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's time to get back to romance."

Calm down girls!! This diva is happily married to drummer John Cushon. Oleta says, "I made him wait twelve years! A girl's got to be sure!" Look for her new CD, entitled "Moving On," to be released in late November.

As the applause faded the scene changed to a serious "house party" in the Grand Lobby, complete with dancing, exotic cocktails and hot music by D.J. Serend 'N' Effect Tyler.

Activist/Diva June Washington (2nd from Left) and Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran (2nd from right) pose with members of Detroit's Billionaire's Boy Club in the Grand Lobby.

Fabulous Belinda Jefferies of HRCF's Women's Committee at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Marketing Director for a family-owned business, Belinda was also director of sales for the annual program booklet.

Hats off to HRCF Detroit! Who says a bunch of people in formal wear can't have fun?!

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

SisterHelp Community Fund, along with Hospitality Atlanta, Sisters of 30 Something Special and Dyfferent Gyrl Productions, is asking for donations to assist Cindi Joshua, a friend and sister to our community. Ms. Joshua is in need of a kidney transplant, and financial contributions, medical referrals, information and/or suggestions are welcome. Please call 707-6866 with any help.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute presents the **8th Annual Creating Change Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement!** To be held **November 10–12, 1995** at the Westin Hotel Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan. Featured guests include **Elias Farajaje-Jones** (a Spanish speaking, afrikan, native-american and an anarchist guerilla, theologian/AIDS terorrist/writer/cultural critic/performance artist/ritual technician) and **Urvashi Vaid** (a community organizer and attorney, past NGLTF executive director and author of Virtual Equality.)

On October 19, Deputy Assistant to President Clinton, Marshe Scott, wrote Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Humanr Rights Campaign Fund: "I am pleased to let you know that on Friday, Oct. 20, 1995, the **President will formally endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.** As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, I know that you and your organization have worked tirelessly to promote passage of this important legislation. The leadership role taken by the Human Rights Campaign to rally public support for this issue has culminated in the bi-partisan endorsements from over 157 members of Congress. The President is delighted to join with you and our many friends in Congress who endorse and support this important civil rights legislation."

Neighborhood Playhouse will hold auditions for "To Kill a Mockingbird" with cold readings at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday November 12th and Monday, November 13th. Needed are 1 African-American male (18–50) and 1 African-American female (20–50). No appointment necessary. Call 404/373-3904 for more information.

AID Atlanta now offers a **Support Group for African-American Men Living with HIV/AIDS.** Group meets every Tuesday from 7–9 p.m. at AID Atlanta offices (1438 W. Peachtree St., NW, Ste 100.) Call 404-885-6800, ext. 231 for more information.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1996. The First Community-Wide meeting for Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Celebration will be held at Karats Niteclub, 511 Peachtree Street, downtown Atlanta (across from Crawford Long. The meeting will begin promptly at 7 p.m. The agenda will include a review of Pride '95, new ideas for '96 and discussion about Board and Steering Committee selections. All are welcome! Let's make Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 a world-class event!

Artists in all disciplines (except film) are being sought for the **Fourth Annual Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (AGALAF).** The festival willbe held in Decatur **April 11–14, 1996.** Deadline for submissions is Nov. 15 ($10 fee) and Dec. 15 ($15 fee). For entry forms, call 404/874-8710 or write AGALAF, P.O. Box 55475, Atlanta, GA 30308.

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund was announced by Zami for African-American lesbians in Atlanta. This scholarship will be awarded to an African-American lesbian student who best embodies the spirit of Audre Lorde. All financial contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to Zami at P.O. Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

World AIDS Day

December 1, 1995

On World AIDS Day, an international event held on December 1 each year to bring awareness to the pandemic, will be commemorated by a number of activities hosted by AID Atlanta. The World AIDS Day 1995 theme, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," highlights the importance of equality and solidarity in the global response to AIDS.

The Atlanta Hawks, who will play the Mavericks on December 1, will host "Time Out for Awareness," and donate a portion of their proceeds to a number of local AIDS charities. Call (404) 827-DUNK for more information. Also during the day, houses of worship and individuals are asked to ring a bell fifteen times, once for each year of the epidemic, at 1:50 p.m. AID Atlanta is asking people to participate in this event by purchasing a handmade, limited edition, silver plated bell at the benefit art gallery Koolhipfunkystuff, located at 1030 Monroe Drive. Bells can also be purchased by calling the gallery at (404) 607-1095, and all proceeds will benefit AID Atlanta.

The opportunity to educate people about HIV/AIDS will be a priority for AID Atlanta on World AIDS Day, and a number of educational events are scheduled. AID Atlanta youth peer educators will be at North Atlanta High School doing presentations "Teen to Teen" in health education classes, and at the Centers for Disease Control participating in panel discussions on issues relating to teens and HIV. These peer educators will also present to the Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, and at St. Luke's Episcopal Church High School on Sunday, December 3.

WAOS Radio, a Spanish speaking station located at 1600 AM will air the documentary, "AIDS Does Not Discriminate" on December 1, after which listeners will have the opportunity to speak with bilingual staff persons at the Georgia AIDS Information Line (800) 551-2728, a state service available in conjunction with AID Atlanta. There will also be a mobilization of AID Atlanta's Hispanic Outreach Workers, who will visit Hispanic community groups, grocery stores, and beauty parlors to provide visitors with HIV/AIDS information.

AID Atlanta's African-American Outreach team will distribute red ribbons and flyers at key MARTA stations, and will also assist the Atlanta University Center in their World AIDS Day program at Spelman's Living and Learning Center. The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual outreach volunteers will conduct a "Bar Blitz," distributing safer sex kits and promoting a "Get Tested" message by providing information on HIV testing locations.

The AID Atlanta Speaker's Bureau will experience their busiest day of the year, with engagements booked at schools, work places, churches and community groups, with additional requests still being made. To schedule a speaker, please contact Chris Parsons (404) 885-6800, ext. 231. AID Atlanta volunteers are also staffing booths at a number of health fairs across the city.

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities **November 22–26.** Featured activi-

ties include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't;" workshops on "Gay Life in Africa" and "A Gathering of Old Queens;" and a closing dinner dance.

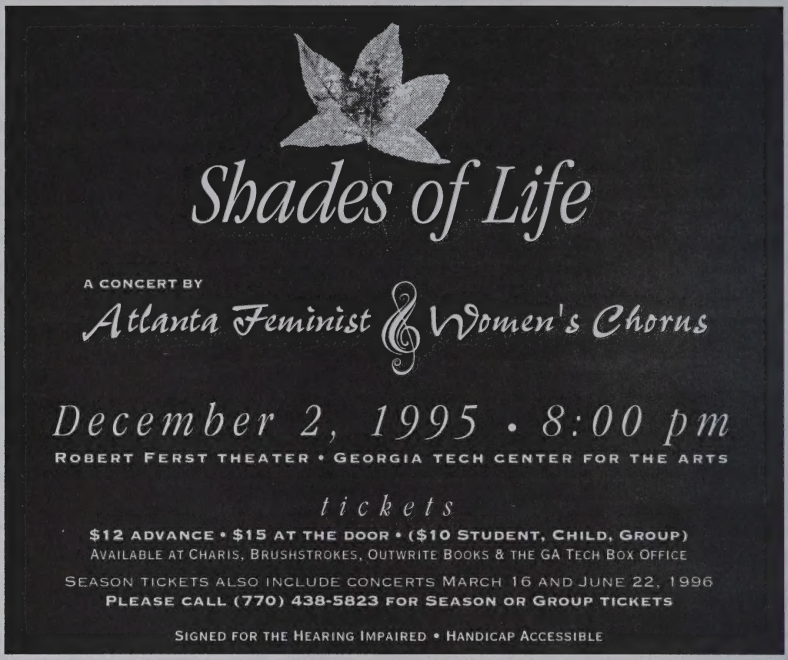
The first meeting for the **Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS Planning Commission was held on Oct. 21** at Believe and Receive Ministry. This Commission will include a diverse mix of African-American clergy, community workers and volunteers who will collaborate to establish a Week of Prayer in March 1996 for African-American churches in Atlanta. The goal of this event is to enjoin the faith community, mass media and gospel radio stations to broaden HIV awareness, education and services for our people. Based on the Harlem Week of Prayer in New York (established in 1988), the Week of Prayer is a coordinated week of activities in which participants can demonstrate their commitment in various ways (gospel concert, food drive, HIV seminar, bereavement service). The Planning Committee will actually determine how the Week of Prayer will be observed in Atlanta. This is an historic opportunity to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness event which the African-American community can embrace as its own. We would like you to be a part of the planning process. The institute for Minority AIDS Prevention Studies (I-MAPS) will provide technical assistance for the Atlanta replication of the Week of Prayer. For more information please call Craig Washington at (404) 885-6800 X277 or Pastor Julia Robinson at (404) 286-9309.

Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be in Atlanta Nov. 17-18, promoting her new book, "Lessons in Living." Book signings will be held at Visions 3000, Clarkston, Ga., Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m.; Chapter 11, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m.; and Truth Bookstore, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. "Lessons in Living(Anchor Books, Hardcover; Nov. 7, 1995; $19.95), is an entirely original collection of inspirational

writing in which the celebrated provides insight into the universal quest for faith and spiritually that inevitably occurs as a result of life's challenges. It explores issues that are of interest to all people: self-empowerment, love, self-worth, faith and commitment, and the journey of life. For more information call Truth Bookstore at 404/523-3240.

Elizabeth Glaser, co-founder of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, **was the recipient of a Special Inspiration Award presented by The Noel Foundation/The United Nations Development Fund for Women** in October at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. The award was presented as part of the Noel Foundation/UNIFEM Awards Ceremony, "A Celebration of Inspiration and Commitment" that honored six outstanding women from around the world, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Glaser died of complications from AIDS on Dec. 3, 1994. The only foundation of its kind in the US, the Pediatric AIDS Foundation identifies, funds and conducts basic research into the prevention and treatment of HIV infection, as well as providing public education and information about the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS among women and children. For more information contact Victoria Thomas, Communications Manager, Pediatric AIDS Foundation, (310) 395-9051.

The Kick Publishing Co has successfully published its ambitious new publication, entitled KICK! Magazine for one full year. The primary focus of this bold monthly publication is to explore black gay and lesbian urban culture in America from a conservative midwestern perspective. Over the past year this publication has challenged itself to explore the diversity of a lifestyle which receives little to no attention from popular mainstream or major gay and lesbian publications.



THE ATLANTA FEMINIST WOMEN'S CHORUS IS A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION. THIS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE FULTON COUNTY COMMISSION UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE FULTON COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL, THE GEORGIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS THROUGH APPROPRIATIONS OF THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND THE CITY OF ATLANTA BUREAU OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS.

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Ten Percent in the Million Man March

by Keith Boykin

"Black by Birth/Gay by God/Proud by Choice." Those were the words my trembling hands scribbled on the posterboard in the brisk morning air at a black gay rally a few hours before the Million Man March.

Hundreds of black gay men and a handful of lesbians joined me on that Monday in an historic openly gay contingent in the Million Man March, proudly representing the tens of thousands of black gay men who were there but could not be a part of our group. Our pre-march rally drew prominent speakers from around the country, including noted civil rights activist Derrick Bell, who is heterosexual, and the black, openly gay mayor of Cambridge, Kenneth Reeves.

Uncertain what lies ahead, we left our rally and quietly began the 30-minute procession to the Million Man March assembly on the Mall. A few passersby hurriedly moved out of the way, two people driving their cars along the adjoining streets honked their horns in support and a number of pedestrians on the other side of the street stopped and stared.

Sensing no negative reaction to our presence, our group grew increasingly ambitious and empowered. We began to chant: "We're Black! We're Gay! We wouldn't have it any other way!" Still no one in the crowed of people we approached reacted critically. The chant became louder and bolder: "Gay Men! (Woof). Of African Descent." As we marched into the multitude of people assembled on the blocked off streets, the crowd reaction seemed to change from curiosity to intimidation and the throngs of black men parted like the Red Sea in front of us.

A police officer on motorcycle idled alongside our group as if he anticipated a confrontation. But as we marched closer and closer to the rally stage, the crowd reaction grew increasingly and overwhelmingly positive, and even enthusiastic. Some raised their fists in solidarity, dozens whipped out their cameras and video equipment to take pictures, but only one of the thousands of people I saw did or said anything homophobic. Gesturing his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

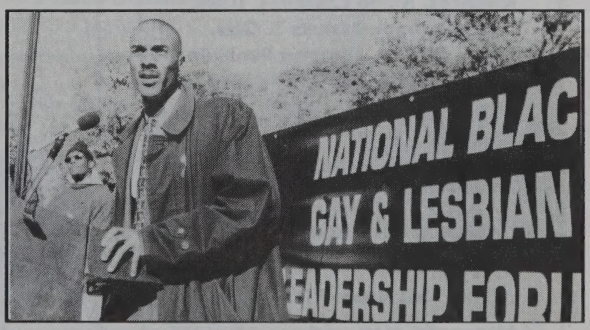

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Keith Boykin, executive director of Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum at the Million Man March pre-rally.

A Litany for Survival:
The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

Charis, ZAMI & Emory's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life proudly present
A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AUDRE LORDE at 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
Harland Cinema Emory Univ. campus, to benefit ZAMI'S Audre Lorde scholarship fund. Reception following 8 p.m. showing with the director Michelle Parkerson & producer Ada Gay Griffin. $5 admission at the door. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

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Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be signing her new book, "Lessons in Living." Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m.

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thumbs downward, he yelled, "God didn't make no mistakes." One of our group shot back, "You're right!" We kept marching.

The lesson in this experience is that when we believe in ourselves enough to come out of the closet and be open about who we are as black gay men and lesbians, our community not only accepts us, they respect us more. For many march participants, that Monday was the first time they had ever seen black homosexuals openly, visibly and unabashedly acknowledging themselves as part of the black community. Given the opportunity to succumb to peer pressure prejudice, they took the high road and greeted our participation. They know that the battle for black liberation requires many soldiers, and in this army, at least, gays are welcome in the military.

What happened on the Mall that day was the beginning of the revolution in our thinking as black people and as black gay people. Black men loving black men is a revolutionary act. In a culture whose popular music and film glorify black-on-black violence, the simple act of loving our brothers as brothers becomes an act of rebellion against the fratricidal status quo.

Who is better suited to help black men learn the value of loving one another as brothers than black gay men, who have been loving one another as brothers for years? Who is better suited to demonstrate to black men how to care for and show affection for one another than black gay men, who have been caring for and showing affection towards one another when no one else would? And who is better suited to lead the long overdue revolution against patriarchy and violence against women than black gay men? Indeed, as Black Panther leader Huey Newton presciently observed in 1970, "a homosexual could be the most revolutionary" of the revolutionaries.

"It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being an African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population."

"That's beautiful," he said.

I saw the revolution in the faces of brothers who smiled at me, or the ones who shook my hand and greeted me at the march. One brother asked about the sticker I wore on my coat, a cutout of the African continent in the gay movement's rainbow colors. "What does that mean?" "It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being and African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population." "That's beautiful," he said.

Despite the welcome extended by the march participants, the march organizers and speakers missed two crucial opportunities: first, to include an openly gay speaker, and, second, to teach black men how to save their lives. While AIDS is now the leading cause of death for black men between the ages of 25 and 44, the message of AIDS prevention was never discussed at the march. Unfortunately, this disease will continue to take a toll on our community so long as black people and our so-called leaders remain to afraid to address publicly issues of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation.

Nevertheless, I hope the presence of our openly gay contingent will help to begin the much needed dialogue on black sexuality and teach the march organizers what the vast majority of rank and file marchers already know: black gay men and lesbians are not a threat to black unity—they are the key to it.

Keith Boykin is Executive Director of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and author of the forthcoming book, One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America, to be published by Doubleday.

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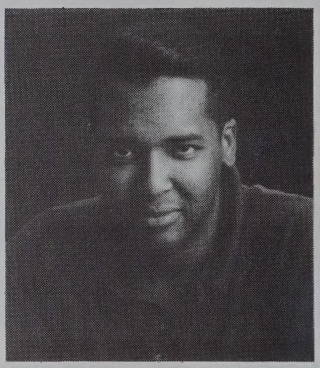

Like me, you probably expect professionalism and experience and appreciate privacy and diversity when it comes to your health care provider.

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Doctors Louise S. Tashjian and Alvaro J. Lopez, patient advocate John Hankins, R.N., and the accepting and diverse staff strive to create a comfortable, private atmosphere, where you and I can receive the medical attention we need.

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Good Doctor, Good Patient

Three AIDS care experts have published Good Doctors, Good Patients: Partners in HIV Treatment to communicate the personal qualities, attitudes, and medical strategies that they have found to be associated with prolonged and healthier survival among people with HIV. Written for people with HIV, their caregivers and doctors, the book reflects the author's professional and personal experiences, including their AIDS long-term Survivor Study, which followed nearly 100 men and women with HIV and featured interviews with 25 leading AIDS specialists.

"Good Doctors, Good Patients provides important insights into critical issues involved in the relationship between a person with HIV and his or her health care provider." commented David M. Gold, former Executive Editor, Gay Men's Health Crisis' Treatment Issues. "It is useful for people with AIDS, their friends, family, caregivers, and especially health care providers and mental health professionals."

"The book is extremely helpful" says Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran, "It told exactly how to handle my feelings of helplessness during a friend's terminal illness."

Copies of Good Doctors, Good Patients may be obtained from NCM publishers for $4.50 for shipping and handling. Requests should be sent to NCM publishers at: NCM Publishers, Dept. JL; 200 Varick St.; New York, NY 10014. Those wishing to receive multiple copies should contact Judy Leong at (212) 691-9100.

The book itself is being provided free of charge as a service by Burroughs Wellcome Co. The company discovered, developed, and manufactures a wide range of therapies for the management of HIV disease, and continues to support a broad research program.

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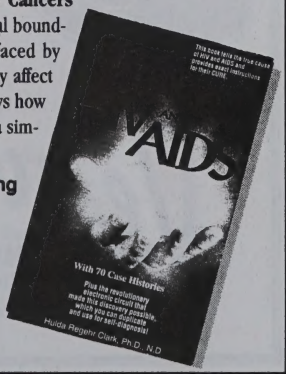

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Night Songs

by Penny Mickelbury, 1995, Naiad

Reviewed by A.J. Hines

Stabbing victims. All prostitutes. A low priority for the Washington, D.C. police Lieutenant Gianna Maglione, the head of the Hate Crimes Unit, feels the crimes have significance and are only the tip of an ugly iceberg. Plagues by homophobia and political patronage, Lt. Maglione forges ahead.

Meanwhile, Maglione's lover, African-American newspaper reporter, Mimi Patterson is combing the perilous streets in search of her missing informants. Lt. Maglione refuses to discuss her cases with her lover. Her stubbornness inadvertently put Mimi and their relationship in danger.

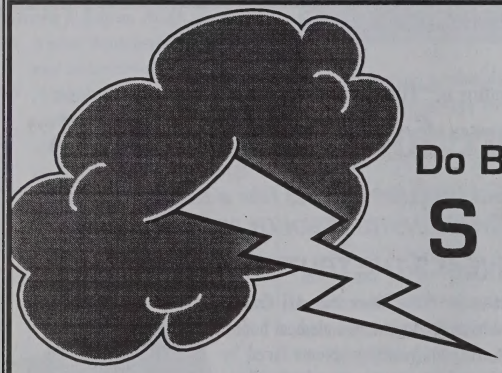
As an African-American writer, Mickelbury is able to address subjects that have traditionally been ignored in the lesbian mystery genre; racism and socio-economic class prejudice.

Night Songs is the second book in the series. Mickelbury's first, Keeping Secrets, pits the police Lt. against the newspaper reporter. They struggle with police procedure that are contrary to the public's right to know. The conflict becomes more complicated by strong sexual feelings.

Mickelbury has strong characters with distinct personalities and similar agendas. However, they have very different approaches which enhances the story and creates real romance.

PHOTOGRAPH BY D.E. HOLSTON

Author Penny Mickelbury



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Miss Dot & Miss Lorde

By Doris L. Harris

On Nov. 17, 1992
10 days before her 50th birthday
my mother let go of the mosaic design
that was her life.
with its missing pieces, delicate thin lines
and healed over slashes,
Cancer hadn't won, she had simply taken her marbles
and moved on,
Same day, another sistuh,
a poet pure,
a lover of women, an explorer
began her own journey,
although they have taken different paths
I know, they'll meet along the way
introductions won't be necessary,
my mother will recognize Miss Lorde as the woman
who wrote all those books, her want to be a radical
call herself a feminist, must be going though a phase
just need a good man, lesbian daughter,
was always sending her, after one of their fights
and Miss Lorde will know Miss Dot very well,
seen her hiding between the lines of her poetry
a weary warrior, who despite her war stories
could never say, I want
I need,
who found out damn near too late
that battle scars, are not love,
they'll embrace
my mother will be the first to let go,
she'll walk away, fast
that's how she walked, talked, lived
Miss Lorde will be able to keep the pace, her legs are
much longer than a nine year old
who's asking for money, to buy a Easter dress,
and she's tougher, as tough as these times have been
for poor black women
and she's wise, wise enough to know that my mother
was running,
from something as unrecognizable as destiny,
with each step, Miss Lorde will see just how fragile
she really was, as fragile as a promise
made to a child

CONCERTS

Atlanta Minority Aids Council and GRP Recording Company Present

URBAN KNIGHTS

featuring Ramsey Lewis Art Porter, Omar Hakim, Victor Bailey Be 2, 8:00 PM at The Lincoln Theater, 1215 U Street, Washington, D.C. For ticket information call (202) 328 6000 or Ticketmaster at (202) 432-SEAT.

Shades of Life

a concert by Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, December 2, 1995 * 8:00 PM; $12 advance & $15 at door, $10 student, child, group. Call (770) 438-5823 for information. (Pictured: Chantel Wright, Asst. Director AFWC)

CONFERENCES

Eighth Annual Creating Change Conference sponsored by NGLTF in Detroit, MI, featuring Elias Farajafe-Jones and Urvashi Vaid, among others. Call (202) 332-6483, ext. 3209 for information.

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership

Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

EVENTS

Nov. 19th—WOOBABI Productions annual trip to

Atlantic City, New Jersey

For information, contact Bobbi & Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

FILM

CLOSING NIGHT FEATURE - Thurs.November 2 at 8 PM Anthology Film Archive (AFA) 32 2nd Avenue @ 2nd Street

Black Nations/ Queer Nations?

directed by Shari Frilot. We are happy to present the World Premiere of this experimental documentary about the historic March 1995 conference which provided an international account of identity politics in black and queer community. Featured participants include South African activists Simon Nkoli & Zachie Achmat, Essex Hemphill, Isaac Julien, Coco Fusco, Kobena Mercer, and Barbara Smith. (Discussion & Closing Night Party to follow).

NO MORE Sweets for You

(Sun, 11/5, 6 PM, KF; Sat, 11/11, 7 PM, AFA) These new film and video shorts unfold the fantasies, trauma and schizophrenia of solo-ness. In an era of corporate grunge, queer modification, empowerment politics and right-wing cyborgs, how do the unassimilated survive without being smashed, named or forced to participate?—Elisabeth Subrin, Curator.

JUNGLI BOOGIE: Queer South Asian Film & Video (Fri, 11/3 PM 9 PM AFA; Sat, 11/11 9 PM KF) A collection of video

and film work by queer South Asian artists from around the world and around the corner. Includes new works by Hima B. and Prathiba Parmar. (And don't miss the after party thrown by SALGA, the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association).—David Dasharath Kalal & Gita' Reddy, Curators.

On Thurs., November 16th, 1995 at 7:00 PM, The Atlanta African Film Society's 11th Annual Hoyt Fuller Festival Film, co-sponsored with Morris Brown College International Student Series, will premiere

CHOCOLATE CITY

a film that takes a realistic look at today's college life. CHOCOLATE CITY, a student-made, feature length film, shot on Florida A&M University campus, stresses the importance of making sound decisions in the nineties.. The film will premier at Morris Brown College, 643 Martin Luther King Drive, SW in Atlanta. For further information, please call the Atlanta African Film Society's Hot-line number (404) 818-6444. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members

Also, on Friday, 7 PM, November 17th at Georgia Pacific Auditorium, 133 Peachtree St in downtown Atlanta, The Hoyt Fuller Film Festival continues with NY filmmaker, Camille Billops, and James Hatch introducing their latest feature, the

KKK BOUTIQUE AIN'T JUST REDNECKS

It's a film that examines the issues of racism in America. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will

celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities November 22–26. Featured activities include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't" and many more activities (see 411 in this issue for details.)

GALLERY OPENINGS

November 10–30: The Recent Works of Michael Morgan, Didier Cameau, Quashelle Curtis, William Downs, III, and

Kemba Sewer. The five African Americans cover the entire spectrum of art. Michael and Quashelle are painters. Their pieces are brightly colored and instantly appealing. Didier is the sculptor in the group, working mostly in metal, and uses the figure as a starting point for his more abstract compositions. William works both in printmaking and drawing, very figurative and stylized. Finally, Kemba has chosen the computer as her tool. Her images are very personal and deal with her childhood, growing up black in America. Artists' reception Friday, November 10, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

MEETING

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96

Community Wide Meeting will be held at Karats, Monday, Nov. 20, 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church with a Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atlanta. 404/388-4624. Bring your favorite covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. All inclusive special rate of $149 per person/double occupancy valid until Nov. 6, 1995. Ask for Dazzle Production Rates. For more information call 215-242-4255.

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GALA

10:00 PM - 3:00 AM Bronx, New York; Open Bar, Buffet, Champagne, $50.00 per person. Bess Knowings 718-992-9073.

VENUS MAGAZINE's 1st Anniversary. Celebration. January 13–16. Watch for Details Next Issue.

Venus™ MAGAZINE FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

PARTIES

November 10...

FIESTA!

Getting Older Latin Style by Cha-Cha Productions. 11 PM–4 AM. Revolutions, Atlanta. (404) 621-5743.

Dec. 9th—Gloria Wells & Associates Annual Holiday

House Party

at the Days Inn, Washington, D.C., TIME: 10-3:00 AM Tickets $12 in advance & $15 at the door. For information, please contact (301) 596-6167.

Dec. 10th—NEFERTITI PRODUCTIONS present

A Holiday Extravaganza

at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9 PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore at (301) 596-6167 or Winnie at (202) 484-0550.

READINGS

A poetry reading for the upcoming anthology

COLORS OF EXPRESSION

To be held at A Room of Our Own Bookstore (444 9th Street, Brooklyn) November 7 at 7 P.M. Submissions still being accepted for this unique, creative work of men and women of color who are living with AIDS. The theme for works of poetry, prose and art slated to appear is "Living Our Lives Day to Day." For more information about submitting work, please call (718) 499-6937.

THEATER

The Atlanta Ballet presents

Planet Dance

Guest Artists: Albert Evans and Wendy Whelan, NY City Ballet; For tickets call (404) 875-9081.

December 7–9, and 14–16—Comfort Zone Productions presents

The Best of Love Letters

by Kimbley Gilchrist and

PIPE DREAMS

and

The Christian and the Jewess

by Ira L. Jeffries, Starring Cheryl L. McClendon and Judi Smith. A series of one-act plays exploring various issues including women and AIDS, opposing viewpoints on religion and sexuality, women and war, drugs and rekindling old flames. Shows at Amuse America, 599 Broadway at Houston. Tickets: $12 in advance, $15 at the door. For information and reservations, call 212-726-1322 or 718-802-9037.

November 22 —December 10—7 Stages Theatre, in Little Five Points, 1105 Euclid Ave. presents

RIFFS

by Bill Harris. A special show to benefit AIDS Education/Services for Minorities will be held Sunday, Dec. 10. Call (404) 753-2900 for tickets/information this showing only.

A hilarious and charming story of four older African-American men who meet daily to read the newspaper, lie, and signify. In a play that combines humor, history, and hope, the retired men of the North End Preservation Association tell stories that reveal the importance and the richness of the African-American experience in the 20th Century. For tickets (404) 522-0911.

November 17–November 19—

EL CIMARRON

at 7 Stages Theatre features baritone Andre Solomon-Glover in the compelling story of Esteban Montejo, who was born a Cuban slave and escaped to his freedom. Tickets, call (404) 522-0911.

The Whole World Theatre presents

Improv Comedy

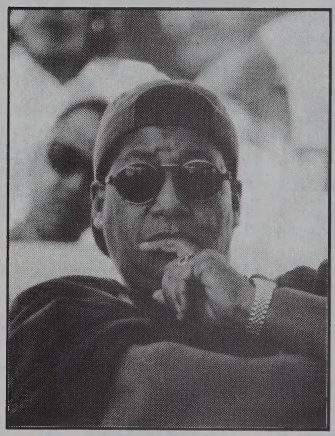
every Thursday night in our groovy, couch and easy chair "in your living room" environment. Guaranteed to be risky, risque and right up your alley if you liked Pulp Fiction. 9 PM. 1214 Spring Street, Atlanta. $5. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

The Whole World Theatre presents

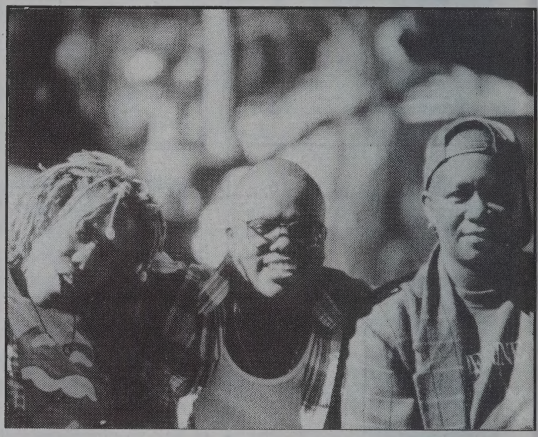
Pimps, Queens, & Dope Fiends Christmas Special

every Friday and Saturday night beginning November 10 through December 23. It's a sexy X-Mas filled with merriment... and miracles. 9 PM 1214 Spring Street. $10. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

OUT & about



Writer Margret Sloan-Hunter, author of Black & Lavendar, at Uloah Sister Fest.

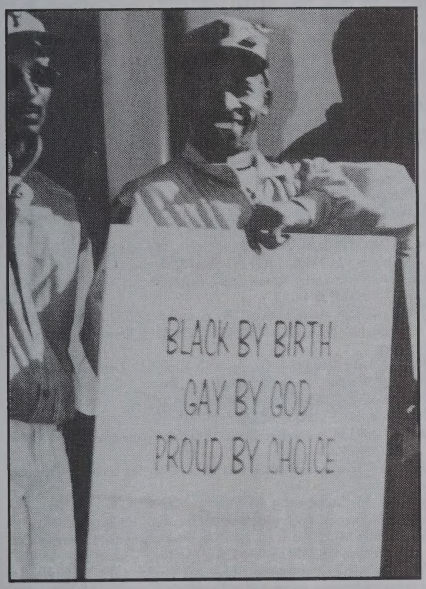


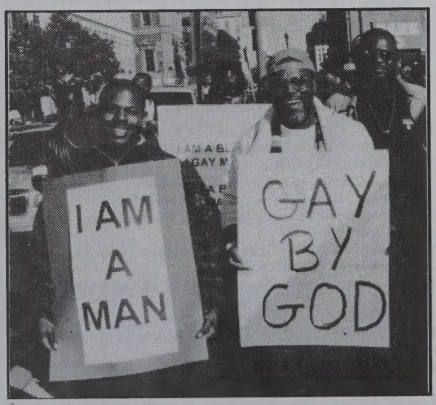
(Left to Right) Jeanine Woodson, Glinda Smith, and Sharon Noble (author of Lesbian Bedtime Stories), all from California.

Michael-Tone Covington, Tony Daniels and Tre Johnson (l–r) at the Venus headquarters during a poetry-reading fundraiser.

Linda Harrison, GA State Univ. Law Professor, and her partner, Joan Garner, executive director of The Fund for Southern Communities, during the Stonewall Bar Assoc.'s 1st Annual Awards Banquet last month

1,000,000 African-American Men Marching on D.C. × 10% =





ALL PHOTOGRAPHY THIS PAGE BY RON SINGLETON

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Creation Woman—poets/artists and affiliates meet last Sunday in the month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

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Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlatna, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,
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Sister Love, Sister's Time—6 PM Thursdays
"Alternative Talk"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wednesday evenings 8:30-10:00.

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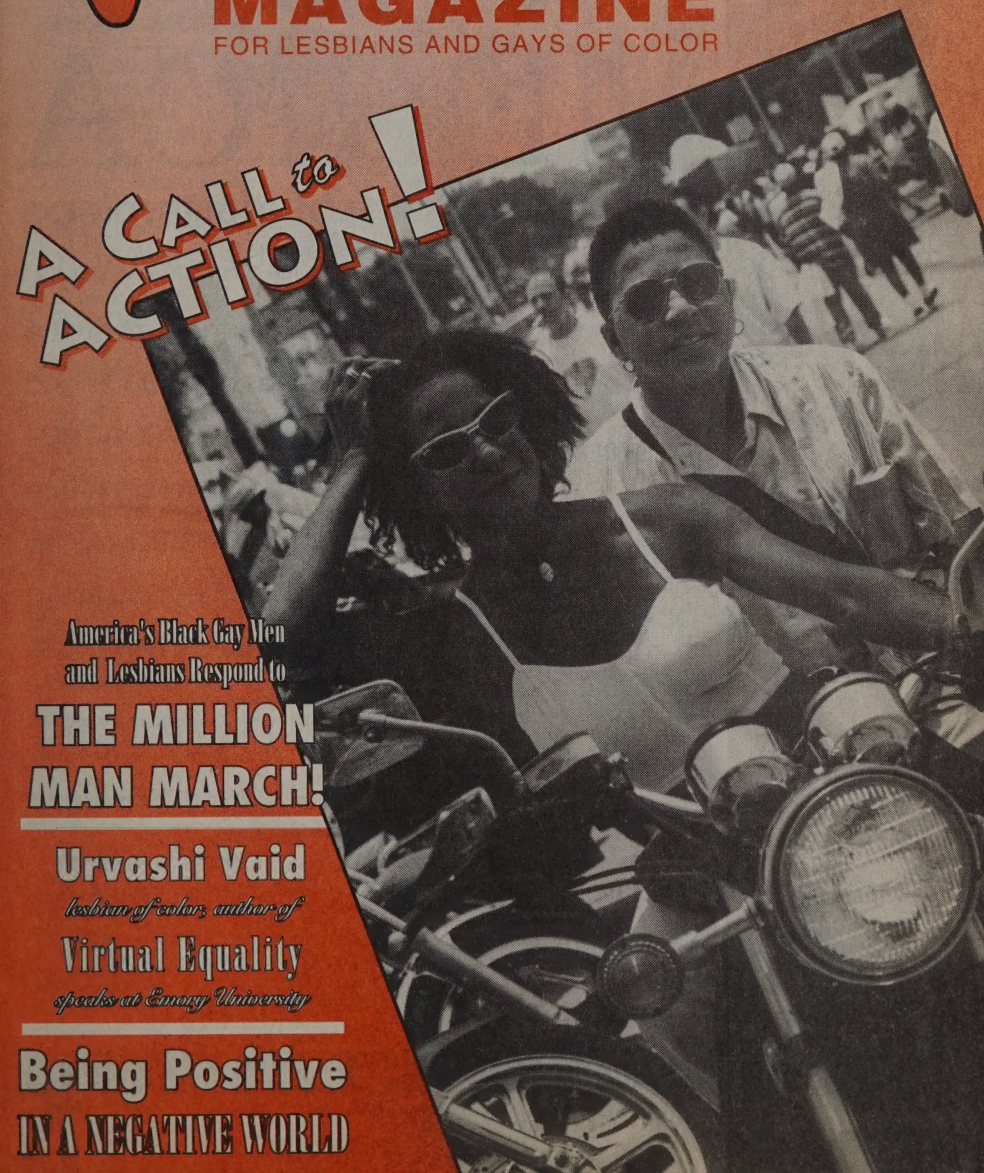

A CALL to ACTION!

America's Black Gay Men and Lesbians Respond to

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Urvashi Vaid

lesbian of color, author of

Virtual Equality

speaks at Emory University

Being Positive IN A NEGATIVE WORLD

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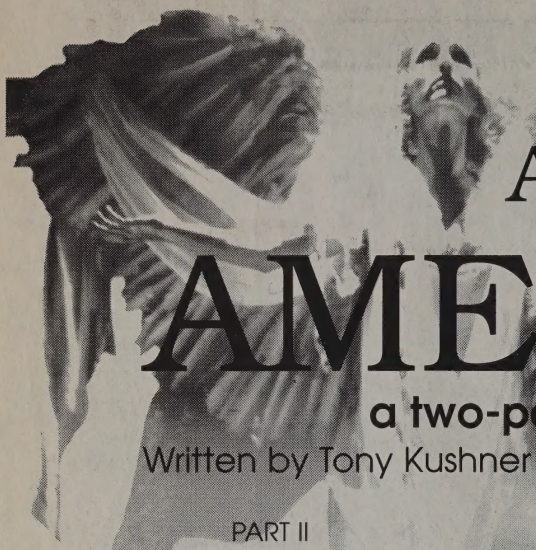

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October 1995
Vol. 1., No. 10

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COVER SHOT
Nova Haynes and Pat Hendricks in West Hollywood Gay Pride Parade
Photo by Ron Singleton Photography

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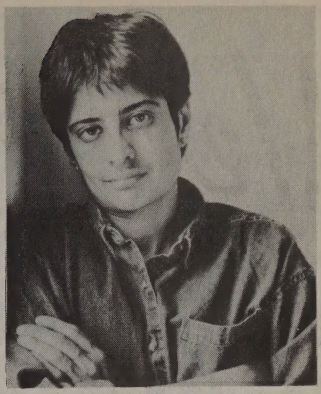
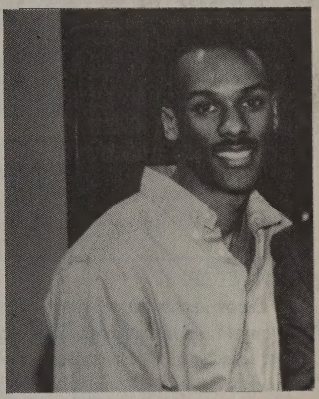
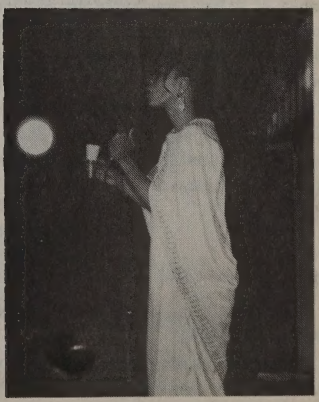


Urvashi Vaid Speaks at Emory.



Black Gays & Lesbians on The Million Man March



Round Up on Atlanta's First Black Gay Pride!!

LETTERS

DEAR VENUS,

Your cover is just too hott! (Sept. '95) I had to call the fire department to put the fire out. Who is the woman on the cover? This is your best cover yet. As a matter of fact, this is your best publication. Keep up the good work.

LaRue Stokes, Valley Forge, PA

DEAR EDITOR:

Perhaps you could add a section called "Getting to Know You" for people who would like to Network with other people who live in Atlanta and other parts of the United States.... Friendship among us all male or female.

Chris, Virginia Beach, VA

DEAR EDITOR:

On Labor Day weekend, I was in Atlanta for Black Gay Pride. As a Black Gay female, I must admit that my stay in Atlanta was not impressive at all. The females were very snobbish and arrogant. It's really a shame that we as "Black Women" are not closer than what we should be. This event that happened in Atlanta was not about someone trying to make a "love connection," but it should have been about networking and getting to know other women from different parts of the states. As a New Yorker, the rudeness of the women here does not compare to those who were in Atlanta during Labor Day weekend. Unfortunately, that will be my last pride weekend in Atlanta.

Anita Curry, Jamaica, New York

DEAR EDITOR:

I am just catching my breath from participating in all of the events for Black Gay Pride 1995. Finally, we can join together for not only the party scene, but a spiritual union, business networking and outdoor fun. Let's start planning for next year. I would love to play a part.

Jocelyn Lyles

DEAR EDITOR:

I am so grateful that we had the opportunity to meet at Atlanta's First Black Gay Pride Celebration. You and your fellow Atlantans really made me feel welcomed. Thank you for being so generous.

With great anticipation and kindest personal regards,

André Morgan, San Francisco, CA

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Tamara Irons

Age: 31

Status: . . . . . "Almost Engaged"

Career: . . . . . Social Worker and Technical Writer

Hometown: . . Atlanta

Latest Book: . "Return to Love," by MaryAnn Williams

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Maurice O'Brian Franklin

Age:..... 35

Status:..... "Dating"

Career: ..... Entertainment Management Consultant

Hometown:.. Ardmore, Oklahoma

Latest Book:. "Break Bread" by Bell Hooks & Cornell West

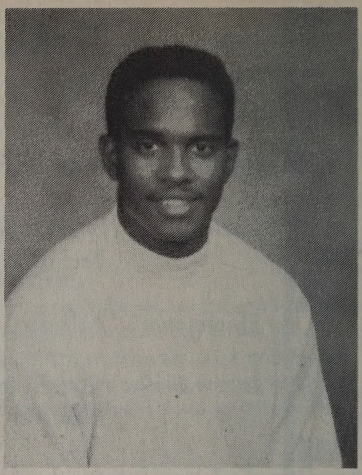
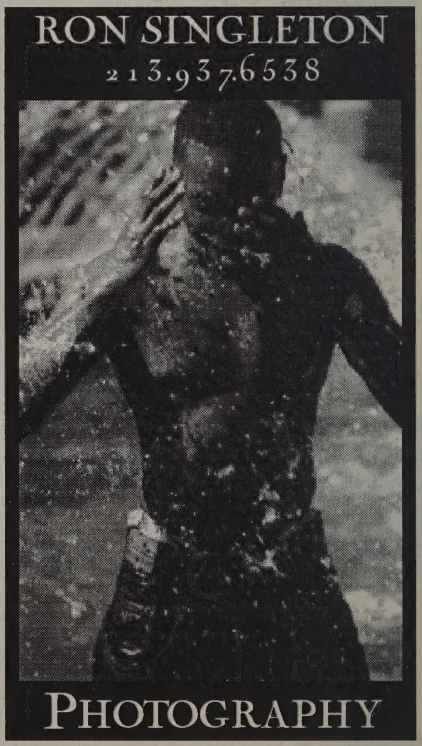


PHOTO BY: RON

As we approach the millennium, I have great expectations for African-American lesbians and gay men. I feel the strength of our movement will grow along with our ability to get along and be more supportive and open about our lifestyle



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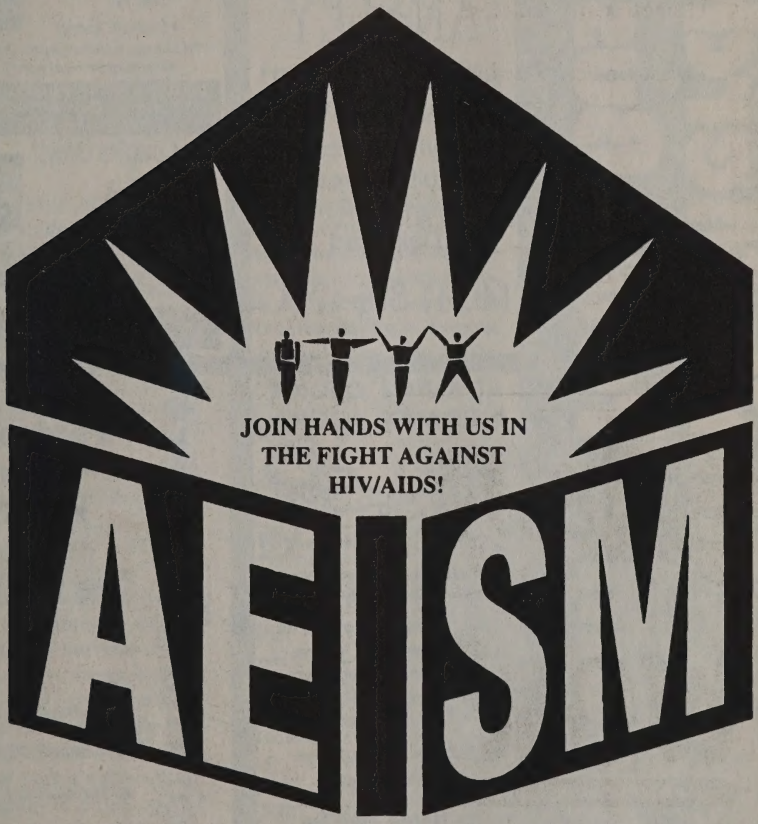

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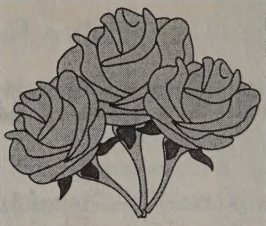

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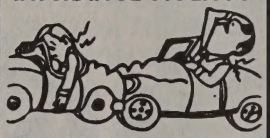

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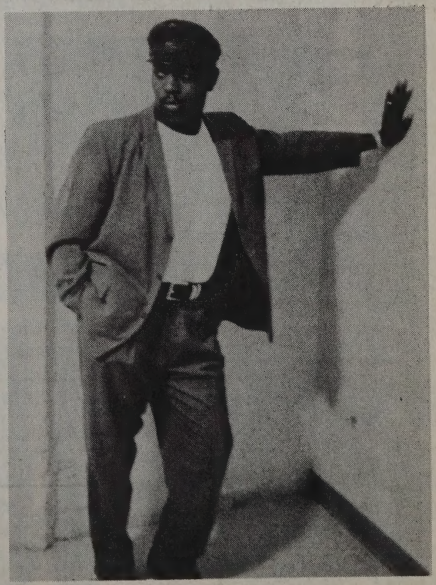
At The Crossroads: Lynwoodt Jenkins

As playwright, actor and poet, Mr. Lynwoodt Jenkins is a new artistic force in Atlanta! Mr. Jenkins has written, directed and produced three theatrical productions, and has received accolades for his dramatic and powerful poetry performances. All since moving to Georgia in 1991.

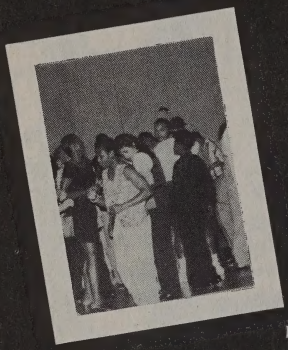
In September 1993, Lynwoodt endeavored to establish the theatrical company, NIA Productions. "NIA," is a Swahili term to signify, "purpose." Thus, Lynwoodt stated that his purpose was to enlighten, as well as, entertain. The inception of NIA Productions was the result of successful and overwhelming responses to his stage play, AT THE CROSSROADS. This collection of work is a choreopoem; choreographed prose, poetry, and/or monologues arranged to complete a single concept idea or statement. The play depicts the diaspora of the African American male experience in today's society. It is a "rites of passage" which seeks to define and affirm what it means to be a man. The all male cast gives dramatic, electrifying portrayals as they weave their tears and laughter into self-knowledge, love and acceptance. The production debuted at the 14th Street Playhouse. Received with standing ovations, performances were also given at; Morehouse College, Clark-Atlanta and Emory University. In 1994, Lynwoodt also wrote, directed and produced, BLACKBERRIES. The production was specifically written to accommodate the requests from Morehouse College and Clark-Atlanta University.

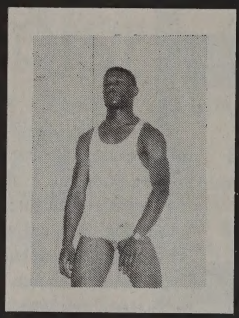
Moving in the spirit, his most recent project is, THE MUSTARD SEED, a drama in three acts depicting the spiritual warfare of a family trying to survive as they learn a lesson in "faith." The production opened at 14th Street Playhouse, Mainstage, March 18, 1995.

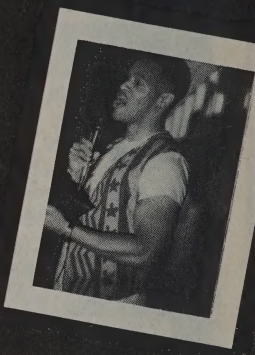


Lynwoodt Jenkins: At The Crossroads

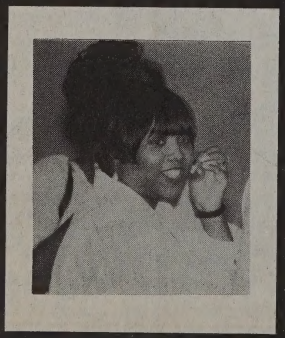
SCENES FROM BLACK GAY PRIDE ATLANTA '95

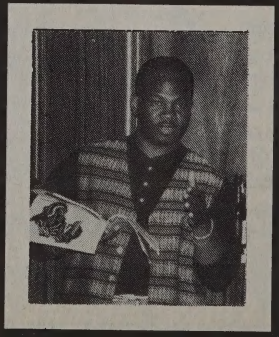






PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHARLES EASLEY





Atlanta's First Black Gay Pride a Huge Success!!

By Charlene Cothran

Atlanta's First Black Gay Pride Celebration was truly "All That!" Driving past Third and Spring Street was a treat all by itself. Mocha muscles everywhere, just mingling in the evening air as if congregated at an ocean front. The atmosphere was so rich that one had to listen closely to discover that there was no music playing outside.

The brothers were making music with their styles and struts! Jazz, Funk, classical, R&B, hip hop and house were all represented! The sight of them was enough to heal the sick!

Speaking of sick, that's exactly how I felt when I arrived at the Otherside and discovered that an old retired drag queen, now managing the place, had pulled all the Venus magazines off the rack.

Apparently they are refusing to distribute Venus unless the club is given FREE advertising. Have you ever heard of such?! Just say no. Just don't go.

I arrived early to greet volunteers at the AIDS Memorial. Had I known we were "going to church" I would have slipped into my pumps, because surely the windows of HEAVEN opened up and showered us with blessings. Seattle activist, Dorinda Henry, delivered an inspiring address, as well as Randy Carn of AIDS Education Services for Minorities and Bruce Williams of Our Cousin's House.

Actress J. Karen Thomas, accompanied by a handsome male vocalist, *worked* Maya Angelou's "And I Still Rise."

I could barely keep my seat when during her performance she pointed her cute little toes, tossed her arm across her head and poetically asked "...does my **** sexiness upset you?!" Have mercy! I'm still upset!

The crowd hushed as she centered the stage. She lit her candle, we all followed. She held it high, we all bonded. Tears began to flow. The spirit of our brothers and sisters joined us and we began to call out their names.... "Wylie, Scott, Vanessa," I sobbed. You had to be there.

Special thanks to all the Atlanta gospel artists for sharing their time and talents, including the "fiery soulstress" Mrs. Charese Stephens. By their presence and willful participation they have shown what being a "Christian" is all about!!

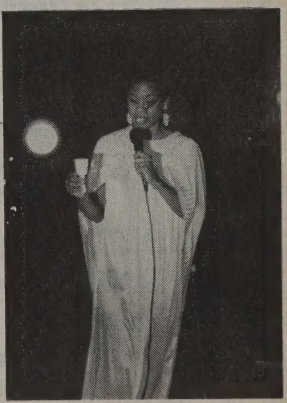


PHOTO BY CHARLES EASLEY

Atlanta actress J. Karen Thomas performs at the AIDS Memorial.

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Being Positive in A Negative World

By Ernest T. Bing, Jr.

When I was diagnosed with the HIV virus, the only image of a person with the virus was a gay man in an intensive care unit of a hospital. This was the image that I saw on the TV, in magazines, and newspapers and it frightened me. It didn't matter how many times I saw those men, I always turned away in horror, then in shame. I believed it was only a matter of time before that image became a reflection of what was to become of me. I was so preoccupied with my own demise that I didn't see any other image but what the media reported. The living skeleton of a man, frail and weak, hooked up to a respirator gasping for air, staring off into the beyond, in other words inevitable death. Although the images have become easier to view I still have a hard time finding a mirror image of me. It seems now that this virus isn't considered a gay disease, the media's attention has turned to children a gentler image to view but I am no longer a child.

I am a 29 year old gay African American male 5'7" with a natural thin build, good looking, healthy and alive after eight years but once believing that the course of the virus would one day lead to my death. Every once and a while I may hear a friend or stranger talking about someone with AIDS or the virus was dying or dead. But I kept asking myself what about me. Their words were constantly playing in my mind and the song I heard was of death. I believed it for a while because there were no positive images to break that record.

I.C.U. MY BROTHER

WHAT DO YOU SEE

I.C.U. MY BROTHER

HOW DO YOU SEE ME

I.C.U.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Last year my nephew passed away and I began to travel back and forth from my sister's house to my apartment on the subway. One night I decided to get off a couple of stops early to walk some emotions off. In the background I noticed someone was following me and that night wasn't a good night to approach me for any reason. I stopped in my tracks to confront this person but before I could say anything he handed me a package and began to give me a speech. The package was a condom with lubrication and information on aids. The speech was about his organization and the importance of safe sex. He was about 28 year old 5'9" 165lbs very attractive and well built, with muscles everywhere. I accepted the package that he thought could save my life and continued on my excursion home without a word to him. As I walked away I thought to myself how dare he approach me with this bullshit! Wasn't it just a little too late for me. I threw the package away. Out of the shadows I heard "Yo, Whad up with dat" and there he was still behind me. I told him that I wasn't sexually active and with tears in my eyes "go save someone else tonight I don't need saving." He came close to me and started that speech that people not living with the virus, not living each day of their life as if it was their last give "it's gonna be all right," "you have to have faith". It wasn't all right, how could it be? How could he stand there and tell me that shit, he couldn't possibly know what it had been like for me. Before I knew it I was yelling "it would be a good idea if you just get the fuck away from me," "I don't know you and I don't want to know you so go preach to someone else." He continued talking as I did my best to ignore him until I heard "I have been HIV positive for the past 8 years" then I stopped yelling. I couldn't believe what I heard because I had never been confronted with an image of a person with the virus who had lived that long and looked that good. We walked and talked and talked and I asked so many questions. I was like a sponge soaking in so many truths and dispersing the myths but most of all that image that I thought would one day be me started to change. He did understand what I was going through. We both were living with the virus and knew the pain of losing people we love. As we departed with an embrace I felt a strange energy pass from him to me. I was secure and at ease and the negative energy surrounding me began to fade. In the darkness of that night I finally saw my reflection.

HIV positive people come in different shapes, sizes, and colors. They range in age from new born to old and gray and are at different stages of the virus. The

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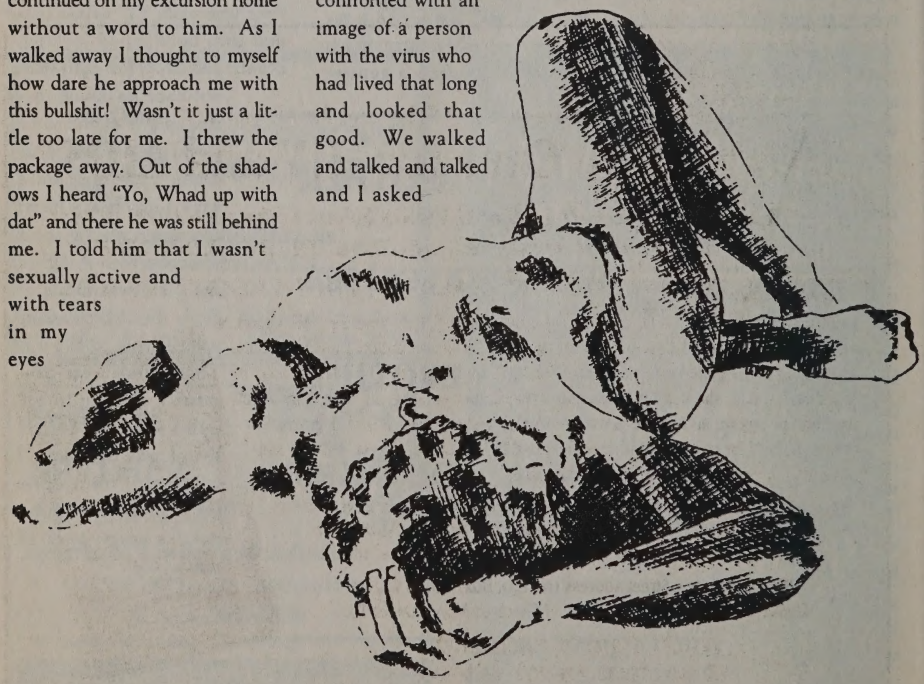

image of the man in the intensive care unit was only one stage of the disease. With the increasing number of people that are living long healthy lives, it may be a stage that doesn't have to be reached. When I found out I was positive I shut down and went into denial, so most of my information came from friends with good intentions but they were learning about the virus as well. I wasn't always receptive to their advice and didn't want to hear what would or could happen to me. The information I received on the virus that I did keep and use came to me by accident after living a long time feeling alone and suicidal. I found the strength and courage to take an active part in living. Friends are comforting but sometimes being around people like-minded can encourage you in ways that friends cannot. I became part of a support group as one step to help me get through the rough times and to physically see healthy people living with the virus.

If you are living with the virus don't become part of the walking dead and know that you are not alone no matter how the world appears. Find a foundation and grow some roots. Let your branches extend far and wide to encompass all that is good on this new journey. Let the love and friendship that surrounds you be your nourishment. Although wicked winds may blow from time to time and you may feel that you have lost your way in the storm. Don't despair just come take shelter under my branches and listen to my song of life.

I SEE YOU MY BROTHER

WHAT DO YOU SEE

EVERY SHAPE, SIZE AND COLOR

I SEE YOU MY BROTHER

HOW DO YOU SEE ME

WITH A STRONG POSITIVE LOVE

I SEE YOU MY BROTHER

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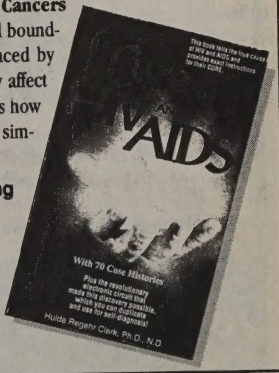

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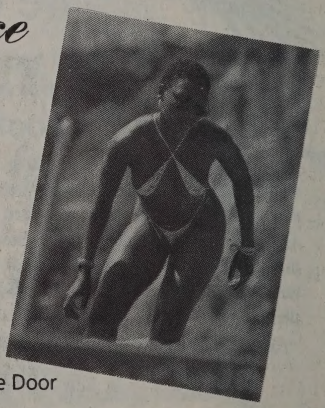

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

KARATS NIGHTCLUB GRAND OPENING is scheduled for **October 6th and 7th.** The club will feature live entertainment with two shows on weekends at 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. Located next to the new 9 1/2 Weeks, Karats is easy to get to from anywhere in Atlanta. Karats is committed to serving the African-American Gay and Lesbian Community with a respectful, sophisticated and exceptionally entertaining night.

THE LAMBDA COMMUNITY CENTER holds an open house on **Sunday, October 22,** 1995 at 2 PM. The Lambda Center invites all to come by and visit its new location at 1518 Monroe Drive directly across from Ansley Mall.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN TASK FORCE PRESENTS A PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE OF COLOR ORGANIZERS SUMMIT in Washington, D.C. on **October 5-8,** 1995 sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). The original concept of the summit was recently altered to support the important work being started by a group of progressive gay, Lesbian, and bisexual organizers of color who met in Pawling, New York at a national Dialogue on the Gay and Lesbian Left in July 1995.

EIGHTH ANNUAL CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE. As the National Skills-Building Conference for the movement, Creating Change brings together lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered leaders and provides them with an opportunity to learn new skills, network, and develop a deeper understanding of important issues. The 1995 Creating Change Conference will be held **November 8-12** in Detroit, Michigan.

BLACK GAY & LESBIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM ANNOUNCES KEITH BOYKIN AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: The National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum announced that it has appointed Keith Boykin, former Special Assistant to President Clinton, as its first full-time Executive Director. "I am very excited about this new position," said Boykin. "We have many challenges before us, but none is more important than the battle for the nation's heart and soul. The radical right has launched a full-scale assault on budget priorities, AIDS funding, affirmative action and public education. African Americans and gays and lesbians are the prime targets of these attacks," he said.

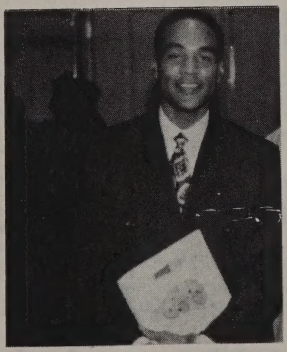

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Phill Wilson (l), and Keith Boykins (r), the new Executive Director of NBGLLF.

Boykin, age 30, a 15-year veteran of two presidential campaigns, served two years in the White House and directed the Office of Specialty Press there. He left the Administration in January to write a non-fiction book titled *One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America,* to be published in 1996 by Doubleday. A graduate of Harvard Law School and Dartmouth College, Boykin has served as a journalist, a municipal consultant, and a public school teacher.

FORUM ANNOUNCES 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum will host its 9th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference **February 15–19, 1996.** This gathering is the largest in the United States. "Black, Lesbians and Gays: Continuing the Struggle," the 1996 theme, celebrates the lives and legacies of the diverse African-American Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgendered Communities. The conference attracts over 1,000 international

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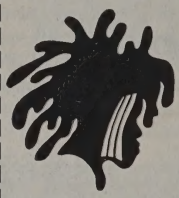

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Gay Men of African Descent, Inc., New York's oldest and largest community-based organization for gay/bisexual men of African Descent seeks an Executive Director to manage its day-to-day operations. A rapidly growing nine-year-old organization, GMAS's primary activities include social support, advocacy, community mobilization, and HIV/AIDS and other health-related services. We target an ethnically and economically diverse constituency living throughout the New York City metropolitan area.

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QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates should have a proven track record in grant management, fundraising, employee management, public relations. Significant familiarity and recent involvement with issues relating to gay/bisexual men, people of African Descent, HIV/AIDS and community organizing will be expected. Must have experience in non-profit sector.

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TO APPLY: Send resume, salary history and requirement along with three references and cover letter to: Executive Director Search Committee, Gay Men of African Descent, Inc., 666 Broadway, Suite 520, New York, NY 10012-2317.

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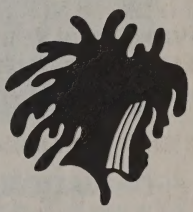

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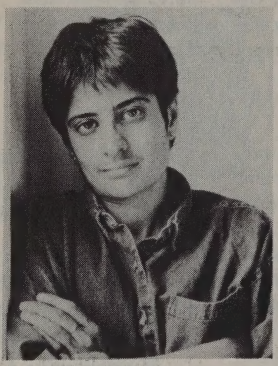

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Urvashi Vaid: Virtual Equality

by Eve Wernicky

"No movement can be built by a people invisible to each other and society."
—Urvashi Vaid

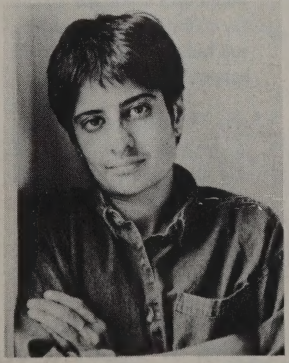
Channel-surf the tube on any given night and you're likely to see a gay character on television or an informative exposé on gay life. President Bill Clinton has recently made U.S. history by appointing the first White House staffer (Marsha Scott) to the post of gay and lesbian liaison.

This decade, coined the "Gay '90's," has catapulted the ascendancy of lesbians and gays into mainstream society in unparalleled fashion. But is the blinding visibility of homosexuals translating into clout-wielding power and true liberation?

That question is the premise of gay-rights advocate Urvashi Vaid's upcoming book, "Virtual Equality." The 36 year old was the first woman of color to become executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the oldest national gay civil rights organization. She resigned in 1993 to write the book; an honest, pragmatic, no-holds barred chronicle of the U.S. gay civil rights movement . It also examines the lack of equality from within the gay struggle.

Vaid has written that there have been three cultural victories in the gay movement: The move by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses, the shattering of the heterosexual culture's denial of homosexuality by "coming out," and the gain of political access. But there is still work to do.

Named a "firebrand activist" by Vanity Fair and a gay "power broker" by Newsweek, Vaid will be speaking at Emory University at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 11 as part of her book tour.



Urvashi Vaid, author of Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay & Lesbian Liberation.

When Time magazine named her as one of 50 promising leaders under the age of 40 in 1994 — alongside the ranks of Oprah Winfrey and John F. Kennedy Jr. — she recounted her family's move from India to Potsdam, New York in 1966.

"We stood out like sore thumbs. Kids used to ask, 'Did you grow up in a teepee?'" The activist in her began brewing in high school, when she became involved in the women's movement. By the time she finished law school at Northeastern University in the early 80's, she was already involved in the gay rights movement.

After a lawyer stint in Boston, she became the public information officer for NGLTF and by 1989 had been selected as executive director, prevailing over a field of more than 70 candidates.

Even though she won and made history, she was not immune to jabs from within a movement dominated by white gay males.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

In "Virtual Equality" she reveals her undaunting fortitude in her struggle to move the gay agenda forward despite inner racism and sexism.

"My revenge was to be really good," said Vaid.

One of the earliest incidents involved a NGLTF perplexed patron, who upon Vaid's selection, approached a NGLTF board member and asked why the organization had chosen someone "who's practically a nigger."

"During the next three and a half years, incidents of racial and gender intolerance piled up like grime from exhaust, a by-product of working in a gay and lesbian movement that labors under the same racial prejudice, gender binarism, and heterosexism that weigh down the broader society," Vaid wrote.

VENUS: Stepping down from NGLTF must have been a difficult decision, why did you feel the need to write the book?

VAID: "I had been working in the gay and lesbian movement for 15 years and wanted to share my experiences and occurrences. There are a lot of people who hear about the movement but they don't know what they're talking about. Usually these types of books are written by academicians and journalists and not the activists who live these experiences because activists don't have time to write. There are very few historical books about the movement—or at least the current movement. I felt I had something unique to offer. The book exposes the myth that gays have achieved anything close to real equality."

VENUS: The book pulls no punches on the mistakes of the movement, how do you think people will react to it?

VAID: "I suspect some people will think it's a bit harsh. I hope people will appreciate that honesty is helpful to all of us. The movement is in a critical place. We need to be more organized. We need political power, not simply access to power. The movement still consists of a small group who have access. I live in a gay resort town (Provincetown, Mass.) where people can come and be gay and really experience what it would be like to live in a free society."

VENUS: You once said in an article that you thought it would take a lifetime for the gay civil rights agenda to win, you truly do not think it will happen in your lifetime?

VAID: "Writing this book made me appreciate the history of this movement. I think it's going to take a long time. Only nine states have gay rights laws. I don't say this as a discouraging thing. Part of what makes me hopeful is that when we lose a battle today, we will try again tomorrow."

VENUS: You analyze a recent lost battle, the ban on gays in the military. In the midst of that cataclysm, what went wrong?

VAID: Just as President Clinton lost credibility with the gay community, I believe we too lost credibility with the White House. I think it was as much our fault as it was his or the government's because we failed to organize a letter-writing campaign, while the radical right wrote thousands and thousands of letters of protest. Our grassroots campaign has a roof and a floor, but no walls."

VENUS: With that in mind, the presidential election monster is beginning to hover over us; how does it look for gays in '96? President Clinton has lost some support because of the military issue and a lacking AIDS agenda.

VAID: "We're in a tough spot and even though Clinton may take us for granted, we have to look out for our best interests. Certainly the conservatists and right-wing are not going to do that. I think gays will once again back Clinton. Colin Powell supported the ban on the military, he is no friend of ours. However, I'm not sure if he will run for president. I think he is just trying to sell books and is pulling off a brilliant PR scam."

VENUS: I'm sensing some publishing envy, is there anything you'd like to disclose?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

VAID: "All right. You got me! This is an exclusive. I, too, am running for president."

VENUS: That's not entirely an off-base probe, especially after the Time article. Do you have plans to enter the political arena someday?

VAID: "I don't think so. I work better as an advocate because I can't compromise. I'm sorry, but I don't know how to be a bureaucrat. But I seriously think there should be a gay candidate in the '96 election to do what Pat Robertson did. We can learn a lot from the radical right. He was able to identify a national network of supporters. The '96 election will be crucial. Look at what happened in the 1994 congressional election. Only 39% voted and there was a balance of power based on a handful of votes. Imagine what an impact we could have if we registered 1.5 million gay people for '96?"

VENUS: Other than the AIDS issue, there seems to be a lack of urgency in the gay rights movement.

VAID: "We are declined into complacency and that leads to virtual progress, a kind of computer-simulated equality. I could be regarded as a moral and ethical human being, but that is not where we are right now in society. The black civil rights movement achieved so much change, but racism still persists. Our movement has moved to a "yes, but" argument. Complacency is short-sighted and self-destructive. Every one of our laws can be wiped away by referendum."

VENUS: Is there a need for a more unified leadership? Maybe we could learn something from the way the radical right has catechized their movement.

VAID: "I don't think we are training people. The right wing is training people on how to run for office, even in local campaigns. We are training on the nuts-and-bolts of how to make a mailing list. That's got to change for us. Corporations do this all the time. We need to invest in leadership because I think we have 500 Martin Luther Kings."

VENUS: Is part of the problem that there are so many insulated gay organizations? It seems that instead of multiracial and gender-free organizations, we keep on inventing more single-race or single-gender groups. You intellectualize the self-destruction of Queer Nation, whose motto was "I Hate Straights" as an example of this type of polarization.

VAID: "We have created more identity-based organizations and that has been good and important because it makes every segment of our society visible. The limitation is that these organizations separate us and are limiting. I want a common movement that works. My vision is progressive. For example, women's equality is intimately connected with the gay movement."

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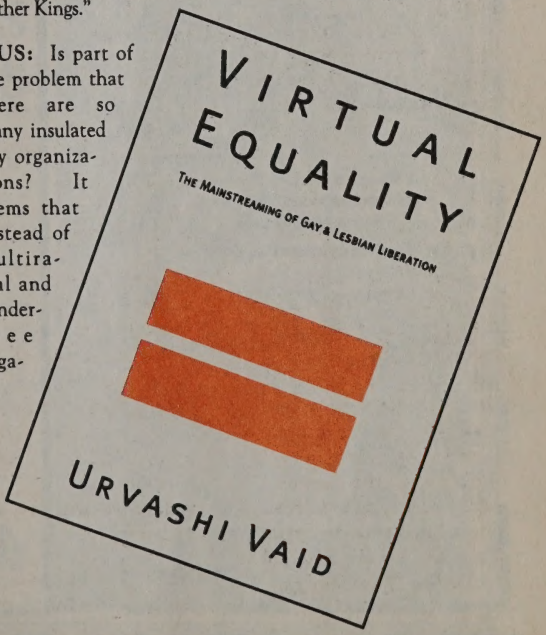

VENUS: Sounds like Utopia.

VAID: "It's reality."

VENUS: In the book you argue that the AIDS crisis galvanized gays to choose "legitimation" or mainstreaming, the concept that gays and straights are the same and are vulnerable to this disease, instead of "liberation," which would expose our differences and change society. The obvious thinking is that legitimation would save lives more quickly.

VAID: "I think we had to do it but when we 'degayed' AIDS, it was a mistake. We had a chance to reach thousands of people, but we divorced politics from social services. We did not make a connection between AIDS and homophobia. We could have made a cultural transformation. But we did not change people's attitudes. We are seen as second-class immoral beings."

VENUS: So what do we do now?

Vaid has written a to do list:

1. Community organizing and winning political battles
2. Public Education strategy and business campaigns attacking hate
3. Leadership Development for activists on gay history
4. Think Tanks to propose public policy
5. Political vision of the power of culture and art to change consciousness

VENUS: And what's next for you?

VAID: "Two things: I want to help build our state and local power and infrastructure. I also want to bring together a progressive movement to end sexism and racial prejudice within our movement. I want to open a Center for Progressive Renewal (CPR), a kind of think tank, start-from-scratch center that would offer fresh ideas."

Eve Wernicky is a freelance writer and former journalist for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

participants with topics such as: Men's and Womyn's Issues; Personal Development; Grassroots Activism; HIV/AIDS; Spirituality; Young Adult Issues; Leadership; and Public Policy. Annual highlights are the awards banquet and AIDS memorial service. For more information on the conference and other programs, please call (213) 9624-7820 or Fax a request to (213) 964-7830.

1996 RYAN WHITE FUNDS AVAILABLE—Organizations in the 20-County eligible Metropolitan area that provide health care for persons with HIV disease and/or AIDS and their families are encouraged to apply for funds made available through Title I of the federally funded Ryan White CARE Act. These funds are administered through the office of the Chairman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. The deadline for submission of letters of intent to apply for funding is **Monday, November 6, 1995.**

Public and private non-profit HIV/AIDS service providers may receive information packets by calling (404) 657-3129. A Technical Assistance Workshop will be held on Friday, October 13, 1995.

IN THEIR OWN RIGHT WOMEN'S SOLUTIONS TO BLACK/WHITE ISSUES OF RACE CLASS AND GENDER, 1895-1995 Sunday - Tuesday, November 12-14; This three-day conference examines the perception of women's roles in conceptualizing, strategizing, and implementing solutions to Black/white issues of race, class, and gender. For information, call 404/651-3476 or 404/681-3643, ext 2171. In their Own Right is sponsored by the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, Ga State University, The King Center Library and Archives, and Spelman College.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND W.E.B. DU BOIS POINT/COUNTERPOINT, Tuesday, October 24, 7 p.m., Atlanta History Center A. Thoraten Kennedy Theater. A panel of scholars discuss the viewpoints of Washington and Du Bois on the most appropriate course of action for African American seeking economic, political, and social advancement at the turn of the century. Dr. Rudolph Byrd, associate professor of American Studies in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts and director of African American Studies at Emory University, moderates.

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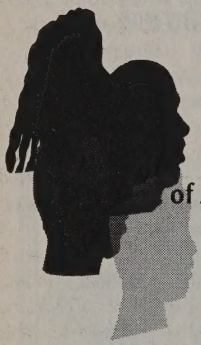

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Entertainment *Dancing* Brothers Sisters *Dancing* Prizes
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Five Ways to Get Rid of Your Potbelly

Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D.

Have you been told that your stomach is no longer cute? Why is it so hard to lose those unwanted love handles? How long will it take to rid your body of that stomach fat? What can you do to get rid of your gut?

To answer these questions will require an understanding to the stomach's anatomy, basic nutrition and physical activity. Unlike any other area of your body, the stomach will not become flat, firmer with or without your clothes on unless you develop an overall sound disciplined nutrition and exercise program. We all have heard that the stomach is the last place to lose unwanted fat deposits. Well, this is so very true. Generally, women store less fat in the stomach area, however men often experience fat gains in this region. This is the reason why men have a more difficult time losing stomach fat. Regardless of sex, losing stomach fat will require patience and commitment.

There are two types to potbellies. Soft potbelly is made largely from what's called subcutaneous fat, meaning fat that lies beneath the skin, just above the muscle tissue. That's why it's soft—your hand is pushing against a layer of fat. Hard potbelly has more of what's referred to as visceral fat, which is fat between your muscles and organs. Fat pushes outward against the abdominal wall and over time generates a potbelly. Some individuals have a combination of both. It is believed that those with a soft potbelly will have the most difficult time losing their gut. However, there is no need to give up.

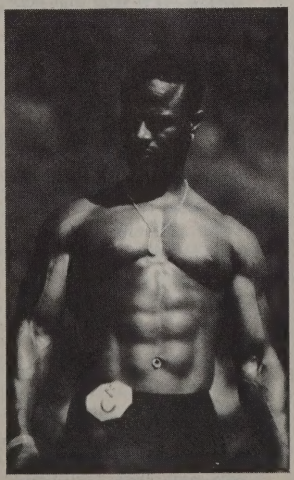


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

It is important to mention that not everyone will need to incorporate the same methods to losing their gut. For some, it may be necessary to reduce daily fat consumption less that 20%, 15% or 10%. For others it will mean incorporating additional, more challenging abdominal exercises. Others may find it necessary to avoid eating after a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

certain evening hour in order to reduce abdominal fat deposit after food is metabolized. Here are five ways to get rid of your gut:

1. **SMART EXERCISE:** There is no such thing as spot reduction.

   For instance you can not exercise the abdominal muscle and anticipate reducing body fat in this area. You can only eliminate fat through exercise and proper nutrition. Should you have excessive body fat, initiate a challenging exercise program accompanied with a low-fat diet. Your workout program should involve 20-30 minute workout three time a week.

   You will not see any results in overall body fat reduction if you do not remain involved in physical activities consistently.

2. **AVOID BIG MEALS:** Make sure you eat small low-fat meals instead of over eating throughout the day. Like all muscles, ones in your stomach are extremely pliable. Unlike skin, they can snap back into their original shape, if you give them a chance. By not overeating and consuming a low-fat meal, it prevent stomach muscles from over stretching and make them stronger as well.

3. **DEVELOP THOSE ABDOMINAL MUSCLES:** Again you can not use any toning process (i.e., lifting weights, push-ups, stomach crunches) to lose body fat. Any toning exercise will only do that — tone. Toning any body part will help shape muscle, thus giving you a better looking body. The before mentioned tips are painless, however exercising your gut will be a true test for beginners. Try starting off with the basic crunch and reach. Lie on your back with your legs bent at a 90-degree angle, feet flat on the floor. Reach out between your knees with both hands and slowly curl your torso forward, raising your head and shoulders off the floor. Remember to keep your neck straight throughout the movement. Reach as far forward as you can, hold for a second and slowly curl back to the starting position. Do 15 to 20 repetitions daily. Start with this basic stomach exercise and explore other more challenging abdominal exercises as you advance.

4. **STRENGTHEN YOUR BACK:** It is true that poor posture will enhance your potbelly. Not only should you correct improper posture, hold in that gut. Hold in that gut not only when someone wonderful walks by, but do this constantly and soon it will become a habit. Strength training (weight lifting) for the back will help improve back muscles that assist in maintaining posture is also encouraged.

5. **STRETCH THOSE HAMSTRINGS:** Yes, it is true that tight hamstrings contribute in an indirect way to your potbelly. As the hamstring muscles become tight, it becomes harder for them to help support the body and keep it upright. The lower back has to work hard at maintaining proper posture and over time poor posture becomes an issue. Remember proper posture is important.

There you have it. The key to getting rid of your potbelly is consistency. Implementing these five tips will help you see results. Be patient with yourself as you work on your overall health. Should you have a tremendous amount of body fat to lose, it will take you longer to see major results in your abdominal area. In this instance look for inches lost and not the six pack right away. Establish a personal goal to start working on losing unnecessary body fat and this will bring you closer to being ready for the beach.

Leonard Jack, Jr., Ph.D. is a health and behavior scientist.

Race and Disability Discrimination:

How To Identify It and What You Can Do

By Andrew Y. Coffman

Start with the premise that individuals and employers can do or say anything they want. They can terminate your job or refuse you service: unless their actions are prohibited under federal law.

Actions prohibited under federal law include discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, age, national origin and disability. The most prevalent examples of discrimination are race and disability. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits both racial harassment and race discrimination in employment.

Racial harassment consists of a hostile work environment caused by unwelcome and inappropriate racially derogatory statements or acts which adversely affect one's ability to perform his or her job.

Race discrimination, on the other hand, is the denial of an employment opportunity or unequal treatment because of your race.

While Title VII also protects against sexual harassment and discrimination, the law does not protect you from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation

The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 protects individuals and employees from being discriminated against because of their disability. Disabilities include mental and physical handicaps as well as infectious diseases, such as HIV or AIDS.

The most prevalent examples of discrimination are race and disability.

If you are refused employment opportunities, refused service from a restaurant or refused treatment from a health care provider because of your disability, then you have legal recourse.

Discrimination may occur if: (1) you are a member of a "protected" class; you are black (or white depending on circumstances) or suffer from a disability; (2) your employer makes an adverse employment decision against you — refuses employment or promotion; (3) you are qualified for the position you seek; (4) an individual from outside the protected class is instead given the position.

For a refusal of treatment scenario, you have recourse if: (1) you seek treatment from a public accommodation, such as a doctor or dentists office, and; (2) that treatment is refused on the basis of your disability or race.

The most prevalent form of disability discrimination today is a health provider's refusal to treat potential patients infected with the Human Immuno-deficiency

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Virus (HIV) or who suffer from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

If you think that you have been discriminated against, by an employer, the following steps are necessary to maintain an action against them:

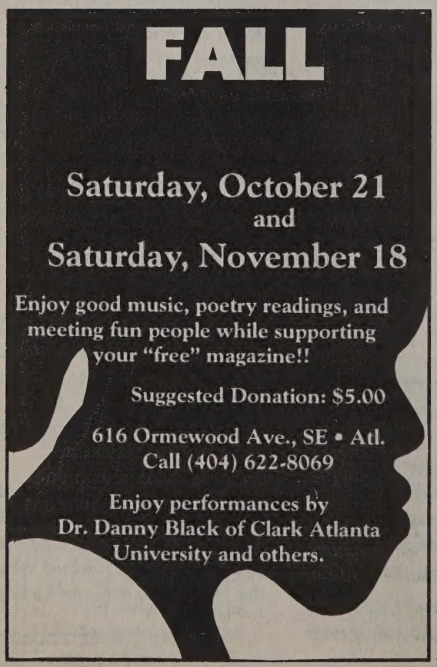
1. **Complain to the EEOC within 180 days of the discriminatory act;**
2. **Your complaint must be in writing and made under oath;**
3. **If you work for the government, contact an EEO counselor within 30 days of the discriminatory conduct and file written charges 15 days thereafter;**
4. **If you have an attorney, either allow the attorney to draft your charges or ask for them assistance.**

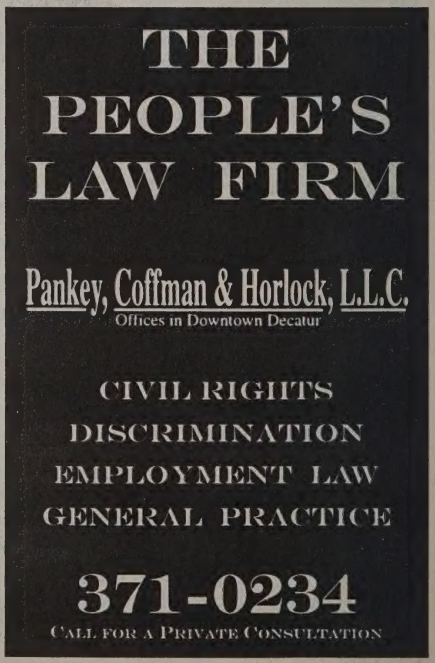
Any time after the first 180 days of your EEOC filing, you may request a "right to sue" from the agency. After receipt of the right to sue, you will have just 90 days to file a legal complaint against the employer in Federal Court.

Contact the EEOC Atlanta District Office, Attn: Intake 75 Piedmont Ave., NE Suite 1100 Atlanta, Georgia 30335 or call them at 404-331-6531 or 331-6532.

If any health care provider has refused you treatment based upon your disability, including HIV or AIDS, then the EEOC has no authority to investigate. Your only recourse for this type of discrimination is to file a civil action in Federal Court. Your best strategy is to consult an attorney because you have to file within two years of the discriminatory act or you may lose your right to sue.

Andrew Coffman is a partner in the Decatur law firm of Pankey, Coffman & Horlock. Mr. Coffman represents a wide variety of clients in race, age, sex, religious and disability discrimination cases.





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In The Spirit; In The Life!

OCTOBER

New York.

Sunday, October 8, 1995 10pm - 4am, Tres & La Shea "Big Blow Out The Party Continues..." South Oxford Tennis Club, 187 South Oxford Street, Brooklyn, New York; Between Atlantic & Hanson Place/Near Fulton Street. $10.00 at door; Cash Bar; Party to the Sounds of D.J. MK Special Guest Appearance. Contact Tres (718) 795-4339, La Shea (718) 345-8541. Any Further Information. Please contact Bess Knowings (718) 992-9073.

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited, New York, Night in Atlantic City, Saturday, Oct 14, 1995. Try your luck in the casinos or spend the time relaxing in one of the clubs: $30; Food & Beverages on the bus; For information and/or reservations contact: Annette Armstrong 212-283-1701, Bess Knowings 718-992-9073.

Birthday Club presents Pre-Halloween Dance at Billy Holiday Restoration Center, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn, New York on **Saturday, October 14,** 1995, 10 p.m. - 3 a.m.; Free Buffet; B.Y.O.B., Set-ups "sold"; Tickets $20.00 (in advance) Prize: Best Costume (not mandatory); For information & tickets: Sylvia - 942-0776, Renee - 642-3359, Chris - 277-1867.

D.C./Baltimore

S.A.U. Ticket Sales presents An End of Summer Jam, Black and Gold Weekend Extravaganza. **Friday, October 6,** 1995, 10 pm - 3 am, Days Inn at 2700 New York Ave. NE, Washington, D.C.

Saturday, October 7, 1995, 8:00 pm - 1:00 am at the Holiday Inn, 301 West Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD. Cash Bar, Lite Buffet, Entertainment and Dancing.

October 29th Gloria Wells & Associates "Haunted Tea Dance" at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore (301) 596-6167.

Atlanta.

AIDS Survival Project and Women's Information Service and Exchange (WISE) are proud to present "Treatment Update with Martin Delaney on **Sunday, October 1st** from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm at the Sheraton Colony Square Hotel (at the corner of 14th St and Peachtree Street in Midtown). Free of charge.

Thursday, October 5th, 12N-2PM Blanche Among The Talented Tenth - Barbara Neely at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Friday, October 6th—The Sun, The Sea, A Touch of The Wind - Rosa Guy author of the acclaimed A Measure of Time and a founding member of the Harlem Writers Guild, is one of a rare and wonderful breed, a storyteller!! CHARIS: Books & more 524-0304

Wednesday, October 11—8 p.m.—VIRTUAL EQUALITY—Celebrate National Coming Out Day as Charis, Outwrite Books and the Emory Univ Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life present Urvashi Vaid author of VIRTUAL EQUALITY: THE MAINSTREAMING OF GAY & Lesbian LIBERATION. She is a community organizer and attorney and the first Lesbian of color to serve as Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Join us at Cox Auditorium, room 4, at Emory to hear this incredible speaker. CHARIS: Books & more 524-0304

Thursday, October 12th, 12N-2PM Transform Your Life - Reverend Dr. Barbara King at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Friday, October 13th, 12N-2PM Some Love, Some Pain, Sometime - J. California Cooper at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Saturday, October 14—CHILDREN'S HOUR—10 a.m.—She's back! Brenda Porter returns from summer travels with more exciting, adventurous and delightful stories for the little people. CHARIS: Books & more 524-0304

Friday, October 20—Octavia Butler, 1995 recipient of the coveted MacArthur "genius" grant and winner of the 1995 New York Public Library's Top 75

Books of the Year Award. Ms. Butler will read from BLOOD CHILD: NOVELLAS and STORIES which explores the paradoxical views of power & inequality. CHARIS: Books & more 524-0304

Sunday, October 22, 1995 at 7:30 p.m. Atlanta Writers Coffeehouse Series—Readings by local authors including Deng Jones and Joan T. Sherwood at Outwrite Bookstore and Coffeehouse.

Saturday, October 28, 8 p.m.-Halloween Bash at the First Existentialist Congregation benefits the Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus Costume contest and disc jockey. 470 Candler Park Drive. Tickets $5 in advance (call 438-5823) or $7 at the door. Sponsored by the AFWC Auxiliary.

Sisters of 30 Something Special "A FALL AFFAIR TO REMEMBER" **Sunday—October 29,** 1995; All-U-Can-Eat Brunch Buffet (11a-4pm), Afternoon T-Dance & Show (4p-9:30pm) For more information call 350-9758.

NOVEMBER

D.C./Baltimore

November 5th,
"Xtremely Xxoctic" Tea dance at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore (301) 596-6167.

November 19th, WOOBABI PRODUCTIONS Annual trip to Atlantic City, NJ. For information, contact Bobbi & Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

New York

The National Sisters In The Life Social Organization, Up and Coming Events: Masquerade Halloween Ball in October; Pre-Valentine Day formal Ball Feb. 10, Robert Treat Hotel Newark Tickets $40; Three hour open bar, Dinner, show, Door Prizes, 50/50 raffle; For further information call Cleopatra (201) 414-9505, Ms. Harriet (201) 673-8189, Ms. Warrior (201) 677-7888.

Atlanta.

Thursday, Nov 2 - Benefit reading by Bell Hooks from her newest book entitled KILLING RAGE: ENDING RACISM. This program will be at the First E. Congregation. $10/suggested donation. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

Friday, November 3rd, 12N-2PM The Passion Ruby - Eboni Snoe at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Wednesday, November 8th, 3PM-5PM Glory Days: 365 Inspired Moments in African American History - Janus Adams at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Thursday, November 9 - RACISM IN THE Lesbian & GAY—This is the second community meeting in an ongoing process discussing Racism within our community. This program will be held at the First E—Congregation. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

Saturday, November 18 - Charis, ZAMI & Emory's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life sponsor this program which is a benefit for ZAMI'S Audre Lorde scholarship fund. We proudly present A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AUDRE LORDE at 4 p.m. & 8 p.m. Harland Cinema Emory Univ. campus. Reception following 8 p.m. showing with the director Michelle Parkerson & producer Ada Gay Griffin. $5 admission at the door. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

Saturday, November 18th, 4:30PM-6:30PM Lessons in Living - Susan Taylor at TRUTH BOOKSTORE, 56 Marietta St. (404) 523-3240

Club Black Roses presents the 11th Annual Black & White Affair in conjunction with the Holiday Inn Northeast have created a Diamond Weekend with lots of Jewels to choose from **Friday & Saturday, November 24 & 25,** 1995. Holiday Inn Northeast, 3499 Street Road * Bensalem, PA 19020. For reservations and information contact the sales office at 215-638-1500 extensions 2164 or 2166, 1-800-992-8333

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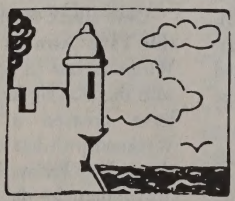

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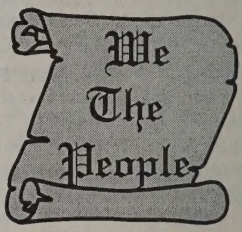

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Vallerie Wagner and Gregory May, BGLLF Co-Chairs

A Call to Action

The Role of Black Gay Men & Lesbians in

The Million Man March

Earlier this year, representatives of the National African American Leadership Summit called for a million black men to march on Washington to show a more positive image of black men than typically portrayed and to encourage them to bear responsibility for the black community. Because of the Nation of Islam's involvement in the march and its history of homophobia and sexism, many black gay men have expressed concern about whether or not to participate and whether they can do so openly and safely.

In light of these concerns, the Board of Directors of the National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum met and discussed the issues in detail. Members of the Forum have also met with march organizers regarding these concerns. After serious discussion, the Forum has decided to encourage all black gay and lesbian people, and particularly men, to participate openly and visibly in the march. We will no longer allow outsiders to dictate who is welcome at the black family table or to divide African Americans by sexual orientation or gender.

The Forum did not vote to endorse the march because we do not agree on its sexist and patriarchal tone and the homophobic comments made by some march organizers. Despite these problems, we have been told by the march organizers that ALL black men, including Black gay men, are encouraged to participate.

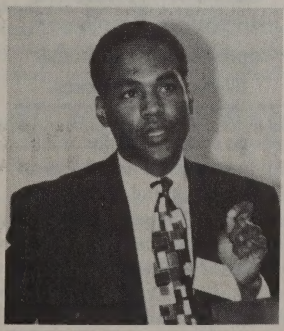


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Phill Wilson, co-founder of BGLLF and Policy Director at AIDS Project L.A., joined other Black Gay men in D.C. to organize a gay contingent for the October 16th march.

We believe that the march provides a unique opportunity to empower black gay men and lesbians and black gay youth. Because black gay people are part of the black community, we will see positive images of open, courageous, proud and diverse black gay people. Hundreds of black gay people participating openly in such an event will send a powerful message, one that will enable many black gays to abandon their mask of invisibility and assume or maintain their rightful place as citizens, mentors, and leaders of their communities.

The position statement of the Million man March says this event "will be filled with the spirit of love for self, love for each other, love for our families...and that it will be a day when we see the value of never allowing artificial barriers to impede the advancement of our people."

Our participation in the march gives us an occasion to confront these artificial barriers. Homophobia and misunder-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

standings about sexual orientation have impaired our ability to work honestly and effectively toward the betterment of our lives, our families, and our communities.

Participation in the march is an opportunity to demonstrate that we are members of the black family, that we are brothers, sons, fathers, sisters, daughters, and mothers, as well as caretakers, counselors, supporters, benefactors and leaders within the black communities. Our involvement as black openly gay people is necessary, lest our absence or low profile become complicit to the silence and invisibility that undermines our role as agents of change. Staying home or marching incognito colludes with those who wish to keep us invisible.

At the march, we must come together with black people , gay and straight, to work and think in coalition about the enormous and urgent problems that are common to all black Americans, regardless of our acknowledged sexual orientation. We should challenge and enlighten those who deem black gay people as marginal, insignificant or threatening to black unity. We must also challenge the hypocrisy, divisiveness, and violence that result from the refusal of some in the black community to acknowledge and value all its members.

Toward that end, the Forum has created an ad hoc committee to organize and coordinate a national black gay and lesbian effort around the march. The committee has prepared the following six-point plan of action.

First, the Forum will hold a pre-march rally for black gay men and lesbians to energize our contingent and distribute our identifying symbols.

Second, black and gay participants, joined by members of the local press, will march as a visible contingent. Remember there is strength and safety in numbers.

Third, the Forum will conduct a post-march press conference to review the march. At this time, we will address the positive impact of the march and respond to the issues of homophobia and sexism that may arise. All the march participants are encouraged to attend the press conference to provide a visual backdrop for the Forum's presentation.

Participation in the march is an opportunity to demonstrate that we are members of the black family, that we are brothers, sons, fathers, sisters, daughters, and mothers, as well as caretakers, counselors, supporters, benefactors and leaders within the black communities.

Fourth, in the weekend preceding the march, the Forum will present three workshops on issues affecting our community. As part of the Million Man March educational conference, the workshops will focus on (1) the role of women in the black community, (2) homosexuality in the black community, and (3) HIV /AIDS issues.

Fifth, the Forum will sponsor a spiritual service for black gay men and lesbians. The service will be conducted on Sunday, October 15, 1995.

Sixth, the Forum will host a social gathering for march participants on Sunday evening, October 15, 1995.

In addition to the plan outlined above, the Forum is working with march organizers to secure an openly gay black man to speak about the role of black gay men in the black community. The Forum also hopes to secure a person living with AIDS to speak at the march about issues of HIV and AIDS.

Although the Forum does not endorse the march, we strongly encourage you to participate in the activities we have planned. Please contact Dennis Holmes at (314) 454-1654 or Steve Walker (713) 864-2242 or the Forum office at (213) 964-7820 for more information about any aspect of the weekend activities.

To fight the battle against racism, sexism and homophobia, the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum relies on you. We need your support.

AMERICA'S

Black Gay & Lesbian Response

to the **MILLION MAN MARCH** scheduled Oct. 16 in Washington, D.C.

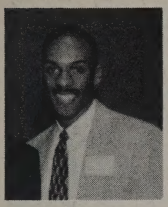


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

KEITH BOYKINS—WASHINGTON, D.C.

Executive Director, National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum

I will be there with them. I encourage all black men, gay and straight, to participate in this march. Why? Not because I support all the organizers of the march. I am not even sure I support all of the goals of the march. But I do support this goal: that black men should come together in peaceful unity, not only on October 16, but on every other day of the year as well.

MANDY CARTER—WASHINGTON, D.C.

NBGLLF liaison to Human Rights Campaign Fund

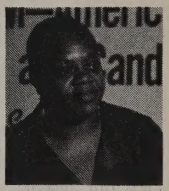


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

I won't be there in Washington D.C. for the march...; If I were here, though, I'd be down there to watch our BGLLF contingent of black gay men and supporting their efforts. You don't have 1 million black men march and not talk about black gay men's participation. BGLLF has not endorsed the march but will be participating, which is very courageous.

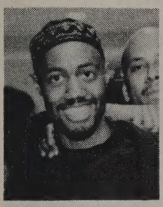


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

CRAIG WASHINGTON—ATLANTA

AID Atlanta African-American Outreach Coordinator

Although I will not be able to attend the march, I extend my support for those brothers who participate. I empathize with those brothers who will march, but, for various reasons, may not be comfortable marching "out." I applaud those brothers who will be marching with BGLLF as visible gay/bi men of African descent.

STEVE WAKEFIELD—CHICAGO

Director, Night Ministry

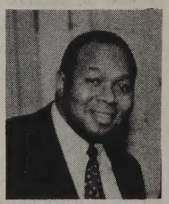


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

While I share Minister Farrakhan's desire to give "the world a positive look at militant, dedicated, sober, determined Black men," my personal ethics will not allow me to do that in this march.... We need a counter demonstration that denounces the sexism, homophobia, reverse racism & demeaning of other human beings that has long permeated the rhetoric of the Nation of Islam.

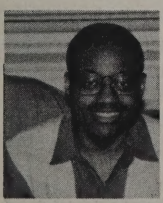


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

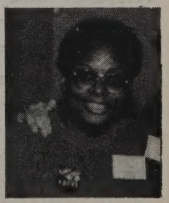
JAMES EARLY HARDY—NEW YORK CITY

Author of B. Boy Blues *and* Spike Lee, A Biography

I do support the idea of the Million Man March—we need a day of atonement, of healing. But I have a big problem taking that journey to D.C. knowing that Farrakhan, Chavis and many of their cohorts have not exactly been friends of same gender loving people. I would be willing to put the differences we have aside and attend, but I don't believe either one has or wishes to really acknowledge that difference....

CHARLENE COTHRAN—ATLANTA

Publisher, Venus Magazine; President, Cothran Publications, Inc.



Although I do not endorse their homophobic attitudes, I do fell that this is the most significant African-American event since King marched on D.C., and even then, our role... was of paramount importance. The only difference... in this march is that many more of us are willing to be "out," and say "I will not be separated from my family, my church, my neighbors, classmates and friends."

AMERICA'S

Black Gay & Lesbian Response

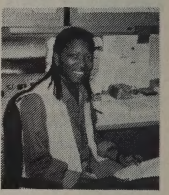
to the **MILLION MAN MARCH** scheduled Oct. 16 in Washington, D.C.

CHARLES B. TARVER, IV—WASHINGTON, D.C.

Director, Public Policy 365 Day Foundation

Yes, I'm participating in the march! I am going to be as open as I can be. It is unfortunate that the march has the controversy of sexism and separatism, but it presents an opportunity for us to make a statement about our community as a whole.

VALLERIE D. WAGNER—LOS ANGELES



Co-Chair, National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum

I plan to attend the March as a self-identified Black Lesbian and march... because unless we all stand and march together, we will surely hang separately. ...(I)t is my hope that after this symbolic march, we will come together as a truly united community & wage the battle against the forces that are determined to turn back the hands of time & deny us "equal protection under the law."

DORINDA G. HENRY—SEATTLE

Board Member, NAACP Seattle Chapter

I firmly believe that every African-American man..., should attend the Million Man March. As long as African-American gay men, lesbians and bi-sexuals allow ourselves to be excluded by half-ass participating in the struggles affecting African-American people; we should expect half-ass regard for our constitutional rights.

GREGORY VICTORIANNE—BOSTON

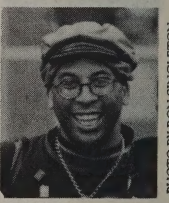


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Public Policy and Community Education, Men of Color Against AIDS (MOCAA)

Even though I may not fully endorse the Million Man March until a Black Gay Man is on the platform, I feel it is crucial as African-Caribbean-American gays to participate in this historical event. It is our voices that will play a vital role in the 21st century. We have the opportunity to be seen, heard, recorded and documented, an opportunity that may never take place again.

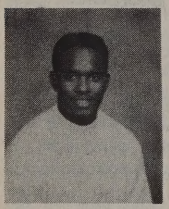


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

MAURICE O'BRIAN FRANKLIN—NEW YORK CITY

Board Member, Gay Men of African Descent, G-MAD

I support an organized Black Gay presence at the March. We should not be separated from the Black family. We share the same concerns and issues; black on black crime, health care, unemployment and education.

ELDER ZACHARY JONES—NEW YORK CITY

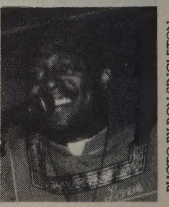


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Pastor, Unity Fellowship Church

While I do not agree with Minister Farrakhan's total philosophy between African-Americans and other ethnic origins, I do feel that it is time to come together around a variety of issues that affect the entire Black community.

AMERICA'S

Black Gay & Lesbian Response

to the **MILLION MAN MARCH** scheduled Oct. 16 in Washington, D.C.

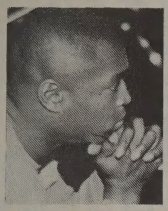


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

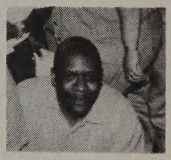
BERNARD HENDERSON

Community Health Educator, AIDS Project Contra Costa

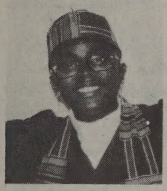
As a 28-year-old openly gay man, I think that every Black Gay man should attend the march to find out 'WHAT'S REALLY GOIN' ON!' I'LL BE THERE!

DR. RODERICK K. LINZIE—ATLANTA

Assistant Professor, Dept of Sociology, Georgia State University



African-American gay and lesbian people are present and accounted for when African-American communities assemble. The Million Man March and the participation of the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and the Unity Fellowship Church Movement are critical to the collective stand for equality and justice now!



REV. S.F. MÁHEE—ATLANTA

Pastor, Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church

I think this platform can be an inclusive device for brothers who will not leave their sexuality at home. I hope our gay brothers attending the march will use the opportunity to discuss exclusionary, misoginystic, sexist and homophobic attitudes of many Black men at large.

PAT HUSSAIN—ATLANTA

Southerners On New Ground, Song

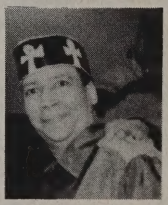
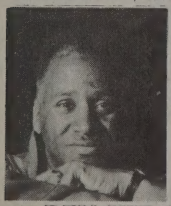


PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

The Million Man March is an opportunity for black men to show this country they are more than athletes, criminals or comedians. They are the children of women with the courage to bring life into a community struggling for survival. They are the brothers of sisters who stand with them against attempts to strip us of our humanity. It is important for men to remember, as they go home to their families, that we welcome them as responsible members of the community.



REV. HERBERT EVANS—PHILADELPHIA

Transfer Clergy, Universal Fellowship MCC

I endorse the idea of the Million Man March. The black man has been left to remain an endangered species in America for far too long.... My concern is that our brothers... who are gay, bisexual... will be excluded or hidden in a closet. We need to embrace each other in all honesty, knowing that we serve a God, Higher Power, an Allah, that loves us as we are.

REV. KWABENA RAINEY CHEEKS—WASHINGTON, D.C.

Pastor, Inner Light Unity Fellowship Church

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Should we march? Yes! Should we march quietly? No! We should be there and be very visible. We have been and shall always be a part of the Black Community. We have always known the important part we play. Here is an opportunity to educate our community about our contributions. We can no longer help build institutions, do the work, and remain silent. Do I agree with everything about the march? No! However, this opens the door for dialogue.

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays—Chicago, IL. (312) 871-2117.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

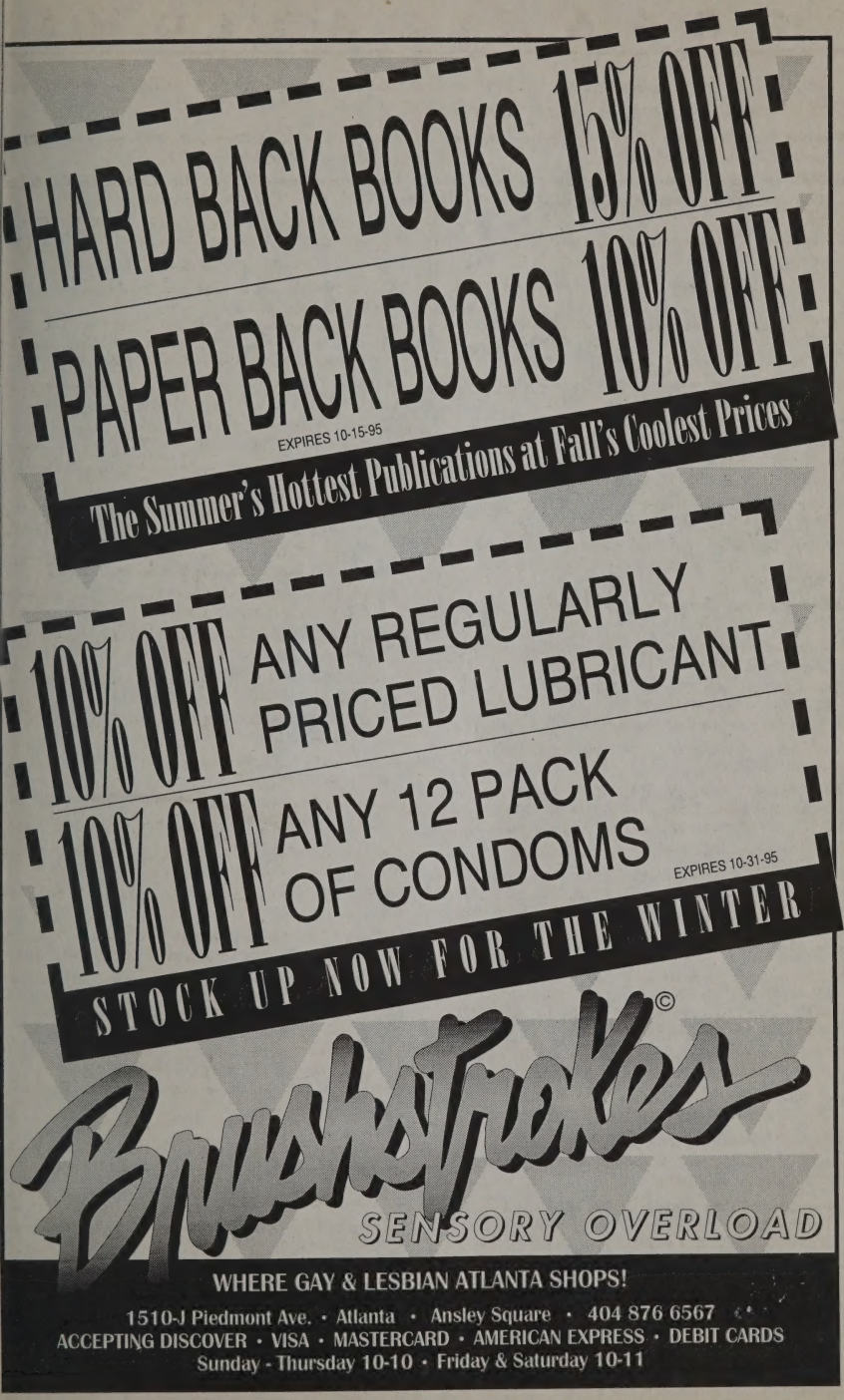
Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

WRFG Radio,
Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.
Crossroads with Baldelie Jones—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.
Sister Love, Sister's Time—6 PM Thursdays
"Alternative Talk"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.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